

JOURNALISTIC AND THIRD-PARTY SCRUTINY OF POLITICAL ADS ON
TELEVISION AND THE WEB: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of Problem	3
Purpose.....	5
Significance.....	6
Outline of Following Chapters	7
2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Conceptual Framework	9
Voting Behavior	9
Political Participation and Social Capital	10
Voter Information.....	11
Public Opinion and Media Effects	12
Media Analysis and Theoretical Approaches	14
Media Effects.....	14
Agenda-Setting.....	15
Attribute Agenda-setting	17
Framing	17
Priming	19
Implications of the Internet on Political Communication.....	20
Political Ads and Ad Watches	23
Historical Background	23
Effects of Political Ads.....	27
Effects of Ad Watches	30
Political Ads on the Internet	31
Campaign Web sites as Political Ads	32
Campaign Web Sites Hosting Traditional Political Ads.....	34
Ad Watches on the Internet	35
Hypotheses	37

3	METHODOLOGY	41
	Study Design.....	41
	Test Groups	42
	Experimental Stimuli	44
	Test Instruments	47
	Manipulation Check.....	49
4	RESULTS	51
	Background of Selected Race.....	51
	Credibility of Ad Watch Reports	52
	Political Cynicism	53
	Candidate Evaluation	54
	Information Seeking and Political Activity.....	57
	Campaign Knowledge	58
5	DISCUSSION.....	60
	Framing and Ad Watch Credibility.....	60
	Understandability and Clarity of Ad Watch Reports	65
	Framing and Political Cynicism	66
	Candidate Evaluation	72
	The Connections between Information,.....	75
	Awareness and Ad Watch Effects.....	75
	Ad Watch Effects on Information Seeking	77
	Ad Watch Effects on Political Activity.....	79
	Campaign Knowledge	80
	Theoretical Contribution and Practical Application	83
	Limitations and Future Research	89
APPENDIX		
A	STIMULI SCRIPTS	92
B	STIMULI WEB SITES	98
C	EXPERIMENT OPENING STATEMENTS	101
D	SURVEY INSTRUMENTS	104
	LIST OF REFERENCES	144
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	159

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>page</u>
1	Research Design: 2X2 Factorial Design with 4 Test Groups (N=155)	42
2	Test Group Demographics, Political Affiliation and Knowledge.....	44
3	Journalistic Framing vs. Persuasive Framing.....	46
4	Cynicism Levels by Frame Before and After Treatments.....	54
5	Candidate Evaluation by Channel Before and After Treatments.....	57
6	Posttest Channel Comparisons of Information Seeking and Political Activity	58
7	Clarity and Understandability: Comparing Frames and Channels.....	66
8	Comparison of Candidate Temperature on Feeling Thermometer.....	75

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The results of this quasi-experimental study reveal main effects of ad watch reports in some circumstances for either framing or channel. The main effect for persuasive or objective framing was found most notably for the credibility attribute. Subjects were more likely to believe objectively-framed ad watches on the Web. The main effect for television or Internet channel was found most notably for information seeking and political activity. Subjects who saw ad watches on the Web were more likely to seek more information on candidates and become politically involved. They were also more likely to say they would vote in the next election. Most notable overall, the ad watch influenced subjects in its intended direction without a so-called “boomerang effect.” Broadly, the contribution of this study is that it examines how ad watches framed in different ways and presented on different channels create affective, cognitive and, ultimately, behavioral effects. This may direct future research toward the study of

a variety of attributes specific to ad watches on any media channel framed by journalists, third parties, or other participants in the political process.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Much has been written and debated about political behavior in the United States, but media coverage of politics is a factor which cannot be ignored, whether it lies at the center or on the periphery of any notion about why people choose the candidates they do, or indeed, whether they participate in the political process at all. Citizens receive information about candidates and issues from the media during an election cycle as part of the discourse from which they construct opinions (Zaller, 1992).

Hundreds of researchers have explored the effects of political campaigns and media campaign coverage on democratic communication, beginning with the classic study of voting in Erie County, Ohio during the Roosevelt-Wilkie election of 1940 (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1948). It and other early election studies formed some of the basis for Klapper's (1960) law of minimal effects for mass communication, which set voters' party identification and their resulting selective perception higher than media information in the list of factors leading to vote choice. This model ran counter to Walter Lippmann's (1922) direct effects notion in *Public Opinion* that the media expose us to the "world outside" and help us create "pictures in our heads" as part of a *pseudoenvironment* (p. 16). It was not until after the rise of television as the dominant medium for political communication that McCombs and Shaw (1972) were able to support empirically Lippmann's idea. Their study of the 1968 presidential campaign established

agenda-setting theory as a new paradigm that questioned Klapper's limited effects model, and as a result launched a body of research that began with the linking of media coverage of issues with issue salience among voters.

Media coverage of political campaign issues in the days preceding an election is now decreasing, while political ads proliferate. A study conducted by Ken M. Goldstein (2002) for the University of Southern California's Annenberg School during the fall 2002 election season¹ found viewers watching the most popular local newscasts in their towns were four times more likely to see political advertisements as they were to see non-partisan news stories about the elections. Goldstein and Freedman found, on average, four campaign ads were aired for every one election-related story during local news broadcasts, and voters saw 39 seconds of total news coverage of political campaigns compared to more than one minute of political ads.

As news coverage of politics in general decreases, so does coverage of political advertising, including any reports designed to determine for the viewer whether the ads are accurate or misleading. Public policy groups are working with industry leaders to change this trend, recently outlining lists of *Best Practices*² for covering political campaigns and providing local news

¹ These results appear in a news release dated October 16, 2002 from the Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School in Los Angeles. The Lear Center, "bridges the gap between the entertainment industry and academia... the impact of entertainment on news is a principal focus..." (from the news release). Ken Goldstein, an associate professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin, actually conducted the research. The project was organized and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

² The *Best Practices* brochure was distributed to local television news departments by the Radio Television News Directors Foundation in 2003. The brochure was created from materials gathered for a report from the E4 Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Inside the brochure, the *Ideal News*

organizations with instructional materials for producing what is generally considered “high quality” political campaign coverage (Tisinger & Jamieson, 2003). Much emphasis has been placed on the development of the *Ideal News Web site*, wherein “informative, definitive critiques of the claims made in political advertisements” rank fourth among twelve political news Web site priorities. However, news directors do not seem to think much improvement in their newsroom’s political coverage is needed. A 2003 survey of local television news directors finds 27 percent believe political news reporting on their station is “excellent” and 56.6 percent believe it is “good.”³

Statement of Problem

Since the mass media have become such an integral part of the political campaign process, the question, "do campaigns matter?" often sends researchers back to media effects studies. Communication and political scientists want to know how much citizens learn from such campaigns, and whether those campaigns affect political behavior. Much has been learned and still more debated about this process. In their classic work, *Voting* Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1966) and the Columbia School of political scientists adopted the view of social psychologists, outlining a “response” (voting) model that connected the “stimulus” (campaign) to the “organism” (citizen) through the filters of “selective perception” and “genesis of dispositions” (p. 278). In their

Web site is described as having elements from twelve different categories. Online ad watches are described in category four.

³ The survey is contained inside a report released at the April 2003 Radio Television News Directors Association Convention in Las Vegas. The report, “2003 Local Television News Study of News Directors and the American Public” was organized for Radio Television News Directors Foundation by the Journalism Ethics Project, which is supported by the Ford Foundation.

1960 classic, *The American Voter* Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes and the Michigan School of political scientists adopted the metaphor of a funnel, contending that many variables including psychology, sociology, party identification and media exposure entered the wide end of the funnel then poured out of a narrow spout in the action of casting a ballot. The Michigan School model has been the most widely accepted until recently as political scientists begin to consider new processes for voting behavior. Popkin (1991) believes voters can make rational decisions based on very little political information. Bartels (1996) contends uninformed voters find "shortcuts" through the forest of political information. Page and Shapiro (1992) might argue that even if individuals make random votes that change from issue to issue independent of party identification, aggregate level opinions remain stable over time.

How then, does the combination of political campaign advertising and news media coverage of such affect political behavior? Traditionally, these two aspects of political communication have come together in the study of a specific type of newspaper or television news report called an "ad watch." Kaid, Tedesco, and McKinnon (1996) defined these as "media critiques of candidate ads designed to inform the public about truthful or misleading advertising claims" (p. 297). The central theme or framing of an ad watch is objectivity. Journalists objectively hold political ads accountable for the information they contain. In a negative ad, that information is usually critical of a political opponent, so the journalist's job is to present an objective analysis designed to show the viewer or reader whether or not the ad is true, false or misleading.

Ad watches are now taking shape on a third channel of communication, the Internet, and they are being constructed by web-based political action groups, foundation-funded fact-checking academics, web “journalists” or diarists, now commonly known as “bloggers,” or even the candidates themselves. Little research has been conducted on this new interactive and self-selected form of political communication that is framed in unique ways, not only by mainstream professional journalists, but by partisan, academic and grassroots organizations, each guided not by traditional norms of journalism, but by their own motivations.

Purpose

Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1992) conducted an experiment revealing that ad watch viewers more often remembered the message offered by the political ads than the corrections offered by the ad watch reporter. The experiment offered evidence of something Jamieson and other researchers had suspected, that ad watches could backfire and enhance the message of the ad. So, Jamieson, a research team from the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School, and CNN reporter Brooks Jackson set out to build a better ad watch, one designed to prevent this boomerang effect. They developed a *visual grammar* for ad watches, utilizing three specific formatting techniques designed to encourage the viewer to process the content of the ad watch, rather than the content of the ad: *distancing* placed the ad inside a mock television screen; *disclaiming* attached a news logo and a notice that the visuals are part of an ad for a particular candidate; *displacing* meant the reporter interrupted the ad to comment on its content and to place graphic "correctors" on the screen (Capella & Jamieson, 1994).

Subsequent experimental research utilizing these formatting guidelines brought mixed results. Cappella and Jamieson found subjects remembered the content of ad watches, which, in their interpretation, made ad watches “effective” (1994, p. 358). Others argued ad watches had the capacity to backfire (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1996; Just, et al., 1996; Pfau & Loudon, 1994). Television networks seemed to back away from ad watches between 1988 and 1992, when Kaid, Tedesco, and McKinnon (1996) found political ad coverage dropped by 50 percent. Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco (2000) reported a slight increase between 1992 and 1996, but the more recent USC Annenberg study by Goldstein (2004) points to a new decline. Mills (2003) found that during the 2002 Florida election, only two of sixteen network affiliated television stations in medium or large Florida markets produced ad watches on any race.

This study narrowed its focus to a high-profile state-level election where the campaign and its outcome gained national attention. A quasi-experiment design was developed to explore comparative cognitive, affective and behavioral effects of one selected Web site and television ad watch. Independent variables will include voter characteristics and exposure to an “objective” or “persuasive” ad watch on the Web or on television.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine one important Senate race in order to compare channel and framing effects of ad watches on both the Internet and on television, produced both by journalists and a fictitious third-party group.

Significance

This study will conduct research on a new area of political communication, comparing what scholars already know about political ads and ad watches

presented on traditional media channels to ads and ad watches presented on the internet. While television has been considered the dominant political communication medium since the 1960s, the Internet is currently emerging as a new computer-mediated political communication system that provides an interactive connection between candidates, political parties, political organizations and citizens. However, the potential for this new interactive medium to promote civic engagement has not yet been fully realized. In fact, some of the first research conducted on political electronic billboards seems to indicate the World Wide Web is acting to widen the gap between the politically active and the politically inactive (Garramone, Harris, & Pizante, 1986). Scholars need to learn more about who constructs political Web sites, what they put onto them, and who sees them. The field needs more research about what citizens learn from these sites and their cognitive, affective and behavioral effects.

Never before has a unique opportunity arisen to compare ad watches produced by “objective” journalists and those produced by “politically motivated” candidates, parties or political action groups. The combined study of the sources, attributes and effects of ad watches in an emerging medium of political communication should reveal new information about how this particular information variable figures into the complex process of voter choice and citizen participation in the political process.

Outline of Following Chapters

In the remaining chapters a review of literature, theoretical background, data, analysis and discussion will be presented. Chapter 2 contains an extensive review of political science and political communication literature relevant to this

study, including the theoretical underpinnings for its design. Chapter 3 covers the methodologies utilized by the researcher to collect and analyze data.

Chapter 4 focuses on the findings. Finally, Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the findings, limitations of this study, and its implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

One basic question that lies at the root of empirical political science research is "what makes voters vote the way they do?" Political communication scientists want to know what role the media play in the political process. This chapter begins with the broad conceptual framework surrounding voter behavior and media effects on public opinion. It then narrows its focus to media analysis and theoretical approaches that apply more directly to this study. Finally, building upon the body of literature centering on political ads and ad watches, it will present research questions and hypotheses.

Conceptual Framework

Voting Behavior

The Michigan Model's "funnel of causality" remains the classic metaphor of the study of voting behavior in the United States (Niemi and Weisberg, 2001, p.15). Forming the mouth of the funnel are a multitude of causes including sociological background, social status, parental characteristics, party identification, evaluation of the candidates and the issues, the campaign itself and the way the media report on the campaign. At the tip of the funnel lies the vote itself. The social-psychological Michigan report of the 1950s, *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960), put a person's party identification at the core of the model.

Most recently, however, political scientists are using this model and others to try to find out why voter turnout and political interest in the United States are so low. On the question of "do campaigns matter?" political researchers are split (Holbrook, 1999). Those who contend they do not point to evidence that voters' votes are only "symbolic in character," part of a "secular ritual of democracy," in which "voters do not necessarily make intelligent informed decisions" (Niemi and Weisberg, 2001, p. 1). This group of political science scholars have argued political ads and media campaign coverage have only a limited effect if any on voter decisions (Patterson & McClure, 1976).

However, another group of researchers finds evidence that campaigns do matter, even if they do not have a direct effect on how voters vote (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Kathleen Hall Jamieson is among those who contend campaigns do matter, and she cites evidence that voters learn from political ads and debates so they can make more informed choices and predict what candidates will do once elected. This allows them to hold elected politicians accountable to keep their campaign promises (Jamieson, 2000). In her study of the 1990 Texas gubernatorial election, Marilyn Roberts (1992) found a "shared agenda-setting function between news coverage and advertising" (p. 888) that enabled her to develop a model that actually predicted voter behavior.

Political Participation and Social Capital

The theory of social capital as it relates to political participation and communication has received much attention since the 2000 publication of Robert Putnam's groundbreaking book, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Putnam makes an important distinction between political

participation, "relations with political institutions," and social capital, "relations with one another," even though the two are obviously related (Putnam, 2001, p. 39). Putnam's analysis of political science research finds personal connections are highly correlated with trust in other people and with political trust. Since "America's stock of social capital has been shrinking for more than a quarter of a century" (Putnam, 2001, p. 40) he connects this decrease with low voter turnout and political participation. Putnam's research is worth mentioning here if for no other reason than because of his conclusion: "the culprit is television" (Putnam, 2001, p. 61). When controlling for education, income, age, race, place of residence, work status and gender, Putnam found a strong negative association between television watching and social capital.

Voter Information

In an age when voters are bombarded with media messages, one might marvel at the number of studies, too numerous to list here,¹ that contain evidence the level of political knowledge among most adults is very low. However, some political scientists like John Zaller believe that methodological flaws in such studies are at the base this claim, since most surveys ask voters to give top-of-the-head responses to questions about political facts (Zaller, 1992). As early as 1966 experts like V.O.Key declared, "voters are not fools" (Key, 1996, p. 7). A "minimalist" view of voter information and ideology (Sniderman, Brody, & Tetlock, 1991) is now generally accepted among political scientists who recognize that through a two-step flow of information, ideas and opinions expressed in the

¹ See Lupia and McCubbins, 1998, E. Smith, 1989, Niemi and Junn, 1998 and Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock, 1991 just to name a few.

media are passed along from one person to another (Niemi & Weisberg, 2001, p.105). It is what people do with this information that is currently more interesting for scholars, and there are many fascinating variables involved in the electoral process and its contribution to political awareness. Zaller (1992) reminds us that this process is highly complex and individualized:

... opinion formation is a multistage process, and awareness may affect different parts of the process differently: Political awareness is associated with increased exposure to current communications that might change one's opinion, but it is also associated with heightened capacity to react critically to new information. (Zaller, 1992, p. 21).

Certainly, the trend toward low voter information and apathy is cause for concern. But Lupia and McCubbins (1998) believe voters can make reasonable decisions with only a little information and Popkin (1994) reminds us "one need not be an economist to see which way the economy is going"(p. 23). Ultimately, public opinion as a whole has remained stable over long periods of time (Page & Shapiro, 1992). Apathy may even serve a twisted purpose, according to Niemi and Weisberg (2001), who cynically observe "indifference and noninvolvement contribute to the smooth operation of a democracy" (p. 108).

Public Opinion and Media Effects

Long-term factors such as party identification still sway public opinion and some issues, especially the economy also play a role in the short term. However, as demonstrated by Putnam (2001), the role of sociological and group attachments is weakening. Evidence of media effects on public opinion and election outcome is growing as voters are increasingly bombarded by political ads, 24-hour cable news programs and now, political e-mails that often link receivers to political Web sites. The limited effects paradigm established by

classic election studies in the 1950s (Lazarsfeld et al., 1948; Berelson et al., 1954) was extended into the age of television (Patterson & McClure, 1976) but may not survive the digital age. Improved research techniques are gathering data as American politics are increasingly dominated by the mass media and politicians learn how to control their media messages.

Zaller's (1992) theory of the nature of public opinion is based upon a model of the effect of elite discourse on mass opinion (1992). It tries to accommodate both top-of-the-head decision-making based on immediately available information *and* acquired political information over time as illustrated by the Michigan model's funnel metaphor. This is also where political science scholarship meets political communication scholarship, both recognizing and observing media effects in the political process. Zaller, a political scientist, provides strong evidence of media effects in his study of the 1984 Mondale-Hart primaries, as noted by political communication researcher Kathleen Hall Jamieson:

Zaller's model is one of the few that ask what the content of media messages is, and whether that content encourages change or stability in vote choices. (2000, p. 11)

Thus, media effects studies can help researchers answer many questions about why voters vote the way they do. In the process of gathering data on media content in the short term and over extended periods of time, we can measure its effects on voting behavior, political participation and social capital, voter information and public opinion. The remainder of this literature review will focus on the theoretical underpinnings of media effects studies.

Media Analysis and Theoretical Approaches

Media Effects

The origin of media effects research lies in the study of political communication. As noted by Everett Rogers in the recently published *Handbook of Political Communication* (2004) no one, overarching theory dominates the study of political communication. Instead, it hosts a "stable set of theoretical themes" (p. 3). In their study of the fragmentation of the field of political communication, Kaid and Yin (2000) found intellectual relationships could develop when scholars with different academic backgrounds converge.

The classic Elmira, New York voter study (Berelson et al., 1954) empirically supported many of the basic assumptions made about voter behavior by both political and communication scientists. It established a "system of discussion" in which candidates supply the message, the media distribute it, and the electorate "consume it" (p. 235). Many variables contribute either directly or indirectly to the discussion, from political party rhetoric, to communication channel selections and preferences to the personal and social characteristics of the voters themselves. The Elmira study established that the effects of these variables and many others must be considered when conducting any study of political communication.

The advent of the electronic media brought great potential to expand the "system of discussion" but, as discussed earlier, voter information levels have remained relatively low. Campbell (1966) found that even though political information is more accessible and voters are often exposed to it, they do not pay much attention. He believes this is because as more people are exposed to political messages in the mass media, they are less likely to discuss those

messages on the interpersonal level. This creates a vacuum in which, despite the strong flow of information from the mass media, no opinion forms at all.

More recent research on public opinion establishes there is a strong relationship between people's level of political awareness and their reception to news stories. Zaller (2002) finds the more familiar the issue in a news story, the less overall attitude change. However, those news viewers who *do* change their attitudes are more likely to be *less aware*. The level of *intensity* of the message is also a factor because it can produce a higher or lower proportion of change. Shipler's 1986 study, which found attitude change on whether the United States should back the Contra guerillas in Nicaragua depended on a message of middle intensity and lower levels of issue familiarity.

Of course, the messages found inside news stories that appear in the newspaper and on television are controlled by journalists through a news selection and construction process called "gatekeeping" (White, 1950; Whitney & Becker, 1982). The number of times a message is delivered by news or the way in which it is delivered was the first media effect to be established as its own theory: agenda-setting.

Agenda-Setting

Agenda-setting is a theoretical umbrella under which research about journalistic gatekeeping often finds a home. The concept arose from the relatively broad study of media effects as a way of establishing an empirical methodology for quantifying how mass media affected the behavior of the public. The foundations of agenda-setting lie in the observations of Walter Lippman (1922) and Bernard Cohen (1963). Lippman's metaphor that the public relies on

the media to create images of the “world outside” from which we form “pictures in our heads” came from his experiences in propaganda and military intelligence (1922, p.10). Cohen’s observation that “the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people *what to think*, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers *what to think about*” (1963, p. 13) expressed the metaphor that led to agenda-setting research and its focus on the mass media (Rogers, Dearing & Bregman, 1993).

Originally, McCombs and Shaw (1972) conducted a content analysis of news coverage and compared it with rank-ordered issues from surveys of undecided voters. They found a startlingly high relationship. While many early agenda-setting studies centered on the media’s effect on voter behavior during the election process, some scholars have instead examined the media’s agenda-setting function concerning only one specific issue.

Single-issue agenda-setting research done longitudinally has demonstrated why issues such as health care or the war on drugs seem to grow in importance and then fade away in the public mind. Issue salience and obtrusiveness factor in as variables in the agenda-setting process because they affect how much the public pays attention to media coverage. People are more likely to consider the things that are repeated often and come easily to mind (Winter, 1981).

Interestingly, the studies that have examined issues revealed that the more obtrusive the issue, the lower the agenda-setting effect and conversely the less obtrusive the issue, the higher the effect (Weaver, Graber, McCombs & Eyal, 1989; Winter & Eyal, 1981; Zucker, 1978). The explanation for this lies in a

person's "need to know." If an issue is obtrusive, a person (1) already knows about it and (2) has probably already made up their mind about it. If, however, an unobtrusive issue such as media consolidation arises, there is a potential for a strong agenda-setting effect if the media choose to cover it.

Attribute Agenda-setting

Second level or attribute agenda-setting takes researchers further into the examination of how certain issue or candidate attributes emphasized by mass media gain importance in the public mind. Media presentations such as news reports or political ads, influence the way people think and talk about the objects of those presentations, such as candidates or issues. Different attributes of the objects, such as image as in the case of candidates, or salience as in the case of issues, may be emphasized in varying degrees inside the presentations (McLeod, et al., 1987; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992). Evidence of the attribute agenda-setting function of the media has been gathered during elections (McCombs, Escobar & Llamas, 2000; King, 1997) and on the local level concerning issues (Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2002). Attribute agenda-setting is closely associated with the concepts of *framing* (Lang & Lang, 1983; Page & Shapiro, 1992) and *priming* (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Wanta & Hu, 1993) which examine not only what the media cause us to think about (Cohen, 1963) but how we think about it.

Framing

There is much disagreement among communication scholars about whether second level agenda-setting theory encompasses framing, or whether framing stands alone as a theory of its own. This paper will take the debate no

further than to list one scholar's summary of the difference between the two. According to Maher (2001), the main distinction between second level agenda-setting and framing lies in "how researchers conceptualize the source of frames in the studied communication content" (p. 88). Maher contends that whereas agenda-setting scholars see a frame as the attribute of an object which *they* define, framing scholars are more likely to consider the *intentions of the communicator who did the original framing*. Both scholars generally take a similar approach with framing, using the theory to examine *ways of thinking* about an object, be it an issue or candidate or something else.

The founders of agenda-setting theory credit Todd Gitlin (1980) with introducing the concept of framing to mass media research in his study of network news coverage of student protests during the 1960s (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Gitlin's (1980) metaphor suggests the media place a frame of reference around its reporting in an attempt to organize the world for both journalists and their audience (1980). Tankard et al. (1991, p. 3) describe a media frame as "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration" (inside McCombs et al., 2000). Entman (1993) defined media frames as a way to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient for the purpose of defining a problem, identifying a cause, making a moral judgment or suggesting a solution.

Framing can be applied to media content when examining either a central theme of coverage (overall frame) or specific aspects of coverage (attributes).

Furthermore, the content need not be news stories. Examinations of presidential speeches (Tulis, 1987), campaign press releases (Miller, Andsager & Reichert, 1998) and public opinion polls (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993) utilized the concept of framing, where the influence on selection and salience come not from journalists, but from elected officials, political campaigns and public opinion.

Generally, research has shown media framing in any form can have a powerful impact on the audience's perception of a news event (Lawrence & Birkland, (2004), issue (Hester & Gibson, 2003; Sei-Hill, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2005), elected official (Yioutas & Segvic, 2003) or political candidate (Kiouisis, Bantimaroudis & Ban, 1999). There is also evidence that framing can have a measurable impact on audience behavior. That leads to a discussion of the concept of priming.

Priming

Priming is the behavioral result of the agenda-setting process (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). In the most classic sense, priming refers to how people react to a media stimulus. Inside the study of political communication, this reaction may take the form of opinion change on an issue or judgment in favor of or against a candidate.

Experimental methodology, and the challenge this presents has resulted in very small body of literature examining priming inside political communication. Kim et al. (2002) hypothesized that "attribute priming" indicates "certain issue attributes emphasized in the media will become significant discussions of issue evaluation in the public" (2002, p. 12). Their study of a local issue found evidence

that the mass media focus attention on certain attributes of an issue and make them more salient.

Implications of the Internet on Political Communication

Many media critics, voter advocates and academics have high hopes the Internet may transform the nature of political communication in an age when traditional media are being blamed for much political discontent (Putnam, 2000). These optimists believe that because the Internet has the potential to provide more information on demand and opportunities for political dialogue and interaction it will create better informed individuals who can participate more in the political process and influence policy-making (Bimber, 1998). Skeptics aren't so sure. Early observers saw the Internet as a complicated maze of raw information that rarely accomplishes its interactive potential (Barber, Mattson & Peterson, 1997). Some political communication scholars note the Internet is bringing "more of the same" news as entertainment, reinforcing the opinions of political elites (Delli Carpini & Williams, 1996) and giving candidates more opportunity to Web sites that are nothing more than "cyberfluff" (Skiba, 1995, p. 20A).

No matter which side one takes, there is evidence the Internet is gaining as a source of political news. A January 2004 poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press revealed the Internet has nearly caught up with radio as a main source of political news. When poll subjects were asked to list their two main sources of campaign news 78 percent listed television first, 38 percent mentioned newspapers, 15 percent radio and 13 percent the Internet, nearly double the 7 percent who listed the Internet among campaign sources in January

2000. The increasing influence of the Web on the political process brings exciting new possibilities for the study of media effects. While the vast majority of political communication research has centered on traditional mass media channels, gradually studies that connect political messages on the Web with voter learning and behavior are creeping into the literature.

The 1992 Clinton-Gore campaign was the first to utilize the Internet for campaign materials in 1992, although Lamar Alexander is credited as being the first to conduct a “chat room” (Davis & Owen, 1998). However, it could be argued that 1996 was the year that the study of communication on the Internet came of age. That year *The Journal of Communication* published a series of articles in its March issue that outlined why communication scholars should study the Internet (Newhagen & Raeli, 1996), why the Internet should be considered a mass medium (Morris & Ogan, 1996) and how researchers might define the Internet’s unit of analysis (December, 1996). It has also been argued the Internet came of age as a campaign tool in 1996 (Davis & Owen, 1998) so as one might expect, that year and those that followed saw an increase in published communication research on the 1996 campaigns (D’Alessio, 1997; Bimber, 1998; Kern, 1997; Klotz,1997,1998; Tedesco, Miller & Spiker, 1999). Following the 1996 presidential election, Barber, Mattson and Peterson (1997), outlined a number of structural ways the Internet may enhance the democratic process. In 2001, Sparks (2001) listed important advantages of the Internet as a political tool. Some media experts are predicting eventually the Internet will have more of an

impact on politics than television and radio combined, and that impact is already being measured one study at a time.

Certainly, political parties, campaign managers and the candidates themselves are not waiting for academic studies to prove the Internet can help them target supporters and sway voters. Internet campaign strategies allow candidates and their managers to customize their approach or appeal. Senator John McCain raised millions via the Internet to finance his 2000 presidential campaign and more recently Howard Dean's web support catapulted him into a long shot spot as a top contender for the Democratic nomination (Lewis, 2004).

Scholars are beginning to learn about citizens who are already seeking information about issues and candidates on the web. Two-way communication provided by candidate Web site forums and electronic billboards gives voters a sense of involvement (Lewis, 2004). Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo (2002) found media coverage on the web can provide people with information they in-turn use in electronic billboard discussions. Althaus and Tewksbury (2002) found that traditional newspaper readers modified their issue agendas differently than online newspaper readers. Kaye and Johnson (2002) took a uses and gratifications theoretical approach in their study (2002) and found voters go to the Internet for many of the same reasons voters go to traditional media. Political Web site visitors use the Internet for information seeking and surveillance more than they do for entertainment and they have a high interest in political matters. The authors were able to connect these high levels of surveillance and interest with a high likelihood of voting. However, more research is needed in this area

because prior studies reveal conflicting information about whether political Web site visitors have high or low levels of political distrust, are more partisan or independent, or are about the same as more traditional media users (Kaye & Johnson, 2002).

Clearly, the jury is still out on whether the Internet will turn around an apathetic electorate and bring it back into the political process, as so many have hoped. In the meantime there is much work to be done to assess its impact on voters who do attend to political and advocacy Web sites that offer increasingly sophisticated venues for information and interactivity.

Political Ads and Ad Watches

This review of literature now narrows its focus to studies more directly relevant to the study at hand. Since ad watch reports are very likely to contain parts of political ads, research about ads is particularly relevant here. This section concludes with hypotheses and research questions the researcher hopes will make an original contribution to the body of knowledge about political ads, ad watches and the effects of both on voters.

Historical Background

Presidential candidates in 1952 were the first to spend millions of dollars on televised political ads but it was not until 1964 that a political ad made national news. Lyndon Johnson's *Daisy Girl* aired as a paid spot only once but was replayed in its entirety on all three network newscasts because of its controversial images and fear appeal (Jamieson, 1992; Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000; West 1993). As television became the dominant mass medium and candidates increasingly used it to communicate directly to voters, news

organizations increased their coverage of political ads. News organizations analyzed political ad content in their stories with varied methods and styles, and these reports generally became known as "ad watches. Lynda Lee Kaid was the first researcher to lead a study of the content of televised presidential ad watches appearing on network newscasts . (Kaid, Gobetz, Leland, & Scott, 1993). Her study revealed that between 1980 and 1988 the number of ad watches tripled, and there were six times as many ad watches in 1988 as in any other presidential election year (Kaid, et al., 1993). Kaid and her colleagues did much more than count ad watch reports. They examined the content of ad watches in both newspapers and newscasts and discovered the reports were inconsistent and unsystematic at best, slanted and unfair at worst (Tedesco, McKinnon, & Kaid, 1993). Journalists tended to critique negative ads and ads that were bizarre and unconventional (Tedesco et al., 1993). While print and broadcast journalists treated ad watch reports as high-priority items, "few ad features analyzed ethically suspect categories" (McKinnon, Kaid, Murphy & Acree, 1996, p. 73). Researchers began to agree that some sort of systematic approach was needed for ad watch reports in print and on television. Bennett (1997) suggested a "three-pronged approach" that would "establish a consistent analytical format...include a set time frame within which each advertisement would be analyzed... and use ad watches as jumping-off points for discussion of campaign issues in other formats rather than as an end in themselves" (p. 1180). Richardson (1998) suggested that if journalists were going to address candidates' patterns of behavior and record, "they should not hesitate to render

judgment” (p. 80). In addition to taking a stand, Richardson suggested journalists “pay greater attention to audiovisual and narrative elements in the ads” (p. 80). While these content analyses were revealing what scholars perceived as weaknesses with ad watch reports, Jamieson and Capella (1997) were simultaneously implementing and testing a systematic reframing approach, which they called a “visual grammar of ad watch reports” (p. 91).

Content analyses by Kaid and other political communication scholars in the early 1990s was also important because it revealed four major reasons why television news organizations are likely to report on the content of political ads. First, they provide an easy source of visuals and conflict, both essential elements for compelling news stories (Jamieson, 1992; Kaid et al., 1993). Second, they provide a direct channel of communication between candidate and voter that could be mediated through news reports (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). Third, ad watches fit into the television news format of horse race political reporting ((Kaid, Gobetz, Garner, Leland & Scott, 1993). Finally, a side effect of ads is that their content set the agenda for which campaign issues will receive media coverage (Kaid et al., 1993).

Journalists have special access to political information. They can use their credibility as investigators to evaluate claims in political ads and serve the public by correcting political ads that might make deceptive or misleading claims. Politicians may then create and air ads to respond to such reports and thus reframe the information (Jamieson, 1992).

Using a public resource in the form of electromagnetic waves, broadcasters try to balance commercial interests with public service obligations. On the local level, that boils down to station managers (under increasing corporate pressure for profit) having the difficult task of balancing political advertising policy with community needs. Results of the USC/Goldstein (2004) study indicate that during the average local news broadcast, voters saw just 39 seconds of total news coverage about political campaigns, but over a minute of political ads. Ad watches formatted under Jamieson's visual grammar guidelines require extensive research by reporters and time-consuming technical production. The recent survey of 103 local television news directors conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (see Endnote 3) found the average local news reporter is expected to produce two different news stories each day, the highest ever in five years of research. This may provide one explanation for the decline in political ad critique reports found by USC/Goldstein (2004). Interestingly, that 2003 survey of news directors found 27 percent believe political news reporting on their station is "excellent" and 56.6 percent believe it is "good." When asked, "do you think those reports help people make up their minds about which candidate they prefer?" 82.4 percent said "yes."

Still, political advertising scholars (Kaid, et al., 1999) remind us of the civic dialogue commercial broadcasters are responsible for providing in a democracy, and "the media's role in this relationship is usually highlighted by its responsibility to provide citizens with information needed to make informed and rational decisions (often labeled the social responsibility theory of the press)" (p. 280). In

materials authored for distribution to local television newsrooms,² Jamieson warns that "the sheer volume of political advertisements can easily overshadow the balanced news coverage a station provides" (1999, p. 15). Political ads provide candidates the ultimate tool in controlling their messages to voters. Television stations are paid to provide a tremendous reach and penetration of these messages. Should they not, then, distribute an objective counterbalance through their news departments? If this public service obligation were not enough, the following summary of political ad and ad watch effects provides another convincing argument for news coverage.

Effects of Political Ads

As early as 1976, Patterson and McClure found evidence that voters learned about issues from political ads. In fact, their study of the 1972 presidential election found political ads had more content about issues than network newscasts. Twenty-five years later, an analysis of the 1996 presidential election confirmed that political ads have cognitive affects (Lichter & Noyes, 1996). There is plenty of evidence that voters not only learn more from political ads than from television news, but also more than from televised debates (Just, Crigler & Wallach, 1990). We also now know that the format of ads can affect voter recall (Kaid & Sanders, 1978) and that voters generally remember the

² Kathleen Hall Jamieson writes the introduction to a booklet entitled *Campaigns for sale: a newsroom guide to political advertising*. The booklet is a publication of the Political Coverage Project funded by the Carnegie Foundation and the Ford Foundation. It was first distributed by the Radio Television News Directors Foundation the year of its publication, 1999, but has since been made available each year at the annual Radio Television News Directors Association Convention.

content from negative ads better than from positive ones (Basil, Schooler & Reeves, 1991).

A political ad is said to have affective effects if it changes the way voters feel about candidates (Kaid, 1981). While the evidence of this has been less convincing than that for cognitive effects, some studies conducted on lower elections levels indicate televised political ads can be correlated with candidate evaluations (Atkin & Heald, 1976; Mulder, 1979). Numerous studies indicate political ads can change the way a voter feels about a candidate (Atkin & Heald, 1976; Hofstetter, Zukin & Buss, 1978; Kaid & Chanslor, 1995; Kaid, Leland & Whitney, 1992; West, 1993). Political ads that focus on issues seem to succeed in changing the image of the candidate in the minds of the voters (Kaid, Chanslor & Hovind, 1992). Agenda-setting effects have been associated with political ads, primarily in helping to explain their cognitive effects. Political ads featuring issues have been shown to affect issue salience for voters and the news agenda of media outlets (Schleuder, McCombs, & Wanta, 1991; West, 1993).

Behavioral effects of political advertising could consist of anything from voting intent to contributing to a political campaign. Obviously, many variables must be considered and a causal effect would be very difficult to prove. Hofstetter and Buss (1980) were able to find a positive association between political ads that air late in a campaign with voter turnout and changes in candidate preferences. Meadow and Sigelman (1982) conducted an experiment in which they exposed subjects to political spots featuring an actual congressional candidate. They concluded, "the extent to which voters can be

manipulated by manufactured images may indeed be severely restricted" (p. 173-74). Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994) also chose an experimental design to test the effects of "issue" political spots and their interaction with news coverage. They were able to demonstrate issue framing in news is important and could determine the success of "issue" political spots (p. 355). Ansolabehere and his colleagues have also made important contributions to research on the "demobilization" hypothesis, which contends attack ads contribute to low voter turnout (Ansolabehere, Iyengar, et al., 1994, p. 829). They constructed an experiment exposing subjects to both negative and positive political spots and found, "exposure to campaign attacks makes voters disenchanted with the business of politics as usual" (Ansolabehere, et al., 1994, p. 835). Their study replication using aggregate and survey data produced the same result (Ansolabehere, Iyengar & Simon, 1999). However, Wattenberg and Briens (1999) believe the aforementioned studies exaggerated the demobilization dangers posed by attack advertising. They claim their analysis of the same data shows that "if negative commercials persuade voters that the choice between the candidates is an important one, then they are likely to increase rather than decrease turnout" (p. 896). Most recently, Goldstein and Freedman (2002) also found evidence that exposure to negative campaign ads can actually stimulate voter turnout (2002). Thus, the debate continues over the effects of negative political spots, and most research has centered on ads that were negative, or in which one candidate attacked their opponent.

The debate over the effects of political ads will continue, however there is at least one consistent finding. Most research on cognitive, affective and behavioral effects seems to indicate political advertising is *more effective* when the level of voter involvement is *low* (Kaid, 1981) or mid-range (Zaller, 2002).

Effects of Ad Watches

While political ads set the agenda of television news, television news legitimizes political ads through its judgment of their significance (Roberts & McCombs, 1994). Researchers want to know whether Ad watches can counterbalance political ads with the same cognitive, affective, behavioral and agenda-setting effects. Experimental studies have brought mixed results.

If remembering the content of an ad watch can be considered learning from it, then ad watches do have a cognitive effect, since viewers do recall what they see and hear in ad watches (Cappella & Jamieson, 1994). However, this cognitive effect may be tied to the debate over the affective effect of ad watches. This debate continues. Some scholars claim they have evidence that ad watches work because they help voters decide which political ads are fair and which issues featured in those ads are important (Cappella & Jamieson, 1994). Others present findings that indicate ad watches do not work, because they instead enhance the message of the campaign ad being analyzed, and thus the voter's opinion of the sponsoring candidate (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1996; Just, et al., 1994; McKinnon & Kaid, 1999; Pfau & Loudon, 1994). Jamieson & Cappella (1997) believe that it is difficult to determine the exact affective effects of ad watches because they are so complex and difficult for voters to process,

and they continue to advocate ad watch formats that simplify political ad critiques.

Content analyses of ad watches indicate they perform an agenda-setting function, due to their placement generally within the first ten minutes of network newscasts (Kaid, et al., 1993). Under inoculation theory, scholars argue that if newscasts aired carefully produced ad watches prior to voters' exposure to negative political ads, voters might be better able to resist persuasive appeals in the ad (Cappella & Jamieson, 1994; O'Sullivan & Geiger, 1995). This researcher was unable to locate any research that has been conducted to determine whether ad watches have any effects on actual voter behavior.

Political Ads on the Internet

Kaid (2004) outlined two ways in which the Internet functions as a vehicle for political advertising. First, it serves as a “discreet and unique medium for conveying information to voters via Web sites” (p. 181), and indeed, those Web sites themselves become political ads. Second, the Internet “provides a channel, or secondary medium, for the distribution or replay of other types of campaign information, including advertisements designed for television, print media, radio, direct mail, or any other format” (p. 181). There are at least four potential ways campaign Web sites can help candidates, voters and democracy as a whole (Kaid, 2002): it can teach voters about candidates or issues and get them more involved in the political process (Kaid, 2002): it provides more opportunity to provide and discover information; it gives users more control over how and when they use information; it provides the opportunity for interactivity; and as a result may reduce political cynicism.

Campaign Web sites as Political Ads

D'Alessio found in 1996, the higher the election office sought, the more likely a candidate will establish his or her own campaign Web site, with Senate candidates more likely to have a Web site than those running for the House (1997). The majority of communication research has indeed focused on Web sites produced for presidential and senate campaigns. D'Alessio used web search engines to locate political Web sites and also found Republicans were just as likely as Democrats to have a Web site, but incumbents were less likely than non incumbents, thus revealing a challenger or underdog strategy (1997).

Klotz (1997) took a different approach in limiting his 1996 examination of political Web sites to senate races. His findings did not support an underdog strategy, as third-party candidates and those with deep financial constraints were less likely to have their own Web site. Kotz also isolated an attribute of Senate campaign Web sites that set them apart from most traditional media campaigns: they were primarily positive in content and tone. Few candidates mentioned their opponent with the intent of placing that person in an unfavorable light and the small amount of criticism that did take place was issue-based rather than image-based. Divisive issues such as abortion were rarely mentioned and the Web sites overall contained a low degree of negative campaigning.

McKeown and Plowman's study of the 1996 presidential campaign found Web sites contained a good amount of information about issues. This was confirmed by other presidential campaign Web site studies (Kaid, 2003; Margolis, Resnick & Tu, 1997). But studies of both Senate and presidential campaigns since 1996 have found more negative Web site content, including attacks on

opponents (Puopolo, 2001; Wicks & Souley, 2003). Puopolo's (2001) study of the 2000 Senate campaign examined many attributes of Web sites, including biographies, mission statements, coverage of issues, interactive features and Web site architecture. She concluded all Web sites contained biographies, most had mission statements, education was the number one issue discussed, Republican candidates were more "web saavy" and Republican Web sites contained more negative campaigning (Puopolo, 2001).

Puopolo (2001) suggested the campaign Web site developed for Hillary Rodham Clinton be adopted as a successful "template" for Senate campaigns (2001), noting women who ran for Senate were more likely to utilize the interactive potential of their Web sites. The comparison of political Web sites for male and female candidates revealed differences in "Web style" are very similar to differences in "Videostyle" of traditional television political ads (Banwart, 2002).

Most of the communication research on political campaign Web sites has been descriptive, but some has tried to draw the connection between content and effect. Some recent studies have indicated a voter's visit to a campaign Web site is likely to improve candidate image (Hansen & Benoit, 2002) while one earlier study did not find much effect on image either way (Johnson, Braim & Sothirajah, 1999). Tedesco and Kaid (2000) found evidence that voter interaction with a presidential campaign Web site reduced political cynicism. Kaid (2002) compared the effects of watching Gore and Bush political ads on television with viewing their campaign Web sites and found differences in 9 of 12 items measured. Among the differences were a higher likelihood of voting among

those exposed to the Web site, and a higher intention of contributing to the candidate or volunteering to work on his campaign among those who saw the televised ads. Those who saw the televised ads were more likely to vote for Bush and those who saw the Web site were more likely to vote for Gore.

Campaign Web Sites Hosting Traditional Political Ads

Common sense would lead to the conclusion that as more web viewers connect to the Internet with high speed DSL and cable modems, more candidates will provide multimedia on their Web sites, including the replay of television and radio political ads.

As early as 1996 Klotz (1997) found Senate candidates rebroadcasting television political ads on their campaign Web sites. Klotz reports about one-third of home pages contained negative ads, however, “where present, it was usually a small part of a web site much more extensive than the sum total of the text of all TV ads run in a campaign” (1997, p. 485).

Unfortunately, anecdotal evidence indicates this positive trend in Web site campaigning does not hold across all campaigns and all candidates. With no time constraints and no government regulation, some candidates have used their Web sites to air candidate “infomercials” several minutes in length and very negative in tone (Kaid, 2002). Other candidates have used their Web sites as a launching pad for negative ads that later aired on television (Hunt, 2004). This particular aspect of campaign Web sites, allowing candidates replay television or radio political ads without cost and without restriction, is attracting more attention and warrants more study.

Ad Watches on the Internet

After political ads appeared on the Internet, ad watch reports soon followed. They first appeared on local television station Web sites during the 2002 election as part of the Radio Television News Directors Association efforts to increase the amount and the quality of political campaign coverage. Ten stations from different markets shared new tools developed as a joint project by the Annenberg Public Policy Center and the Radio Television News Directors Foundation. The stations reported ad watch reports were among their most successful. “Catching people not telling the truth is good TV,” said Jay DeDapper, a New York local television reporter (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 9). In Boston, WCVB-TV and WGBH-TV used a Pew Center *Best Practices* grant to hire a shared researcher for ad watch and web watch reporting. WFLA-TV in Tampa also produced ad watches it then replayed on its Web site (Graham, 2000).

Ad watches aimed at national campaigns have proliferated and are framed differently by Web site hosts with very different motivations. Some are objective, aiming to provide information about featured ads in order to help voters more accurately evaluate them. Such a site is *FactCheck.org*,¹ an ongoing project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, and directed by former CNN correspondent Brooks Jackson. The Center for Public Integrity hosted *Issue Ad Watch 2000*² which “reports on groups conducting

¹ <http://www.factcheck.org>

² <http://www.publici.org/adwatch/>

issue ad campaigns throughout election cycles to increase media and voter knowledge.”

Other Web sites offering ad watches that appear to be framed “objectively” are produced by media organizations. The cable network MSNBC features ad watches and political ad news on its Web site.³ Public broadcasting sites including *Newshour with Jim Lehrer*,⁴ *National Public Radio*,⁵ and *Minnesota Public Radio*⁶ offer ad watches on their Web sites.

Political party Web sites are now offering ad watches on ads aired by their candidate’s opponent. Both the Republican and Democratic parties offer web based ad watching, although the Republican Web site⁷ features the ad watches more prominently.

Finally, at least one USENET group did some ad watching of its own. Calling itself “2004 Campaign Ad Watch,” the Web log site⁸ invited visitors to offer information about the accuracy of political ads and any other news about ads they choose. Most so-called “bloggers” include hyperlinks to sites that either host the ad in question or provide more insight into its accuracy.

³ <http://www.msnbc.com>

⁴ <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/>

⁵ <http://www.npr.org>

⁶ <http://www.minnesota.publicradio.org/>

⁷ <http://www.GOP.com>

⁸ <http://www.livejournal.com/community/2004adwatch/>

Hypotheses

This study will focus on a U.S. Senate campaign, examining the attribute agenda-setting effects of ad watches that appeared on television and the World Wide Web. Its purpose is two-fold. First, it will compare the effects of an objective ad watch produced by a journalist with that of a persuasive ad watch produced by a fictitious third-party interest group. Second, it will compare journalistic and third-party ad watches viewed on two different channels of electronic media.

Traditionally, ad watches have been produced by mainstream journalists, working for local or national news organizations. The advent of the Internet brought new opportunities for candidates, political parties and interest groups to create their own ad watches, breaking down elements of political ads and putting their own "spin" on what the ads say and whether they are truthful. This researcher was interested in viewers' perceptions of the *credibility* of ad watches, framed objectively by a journalist or persuasively by a third-party organization.

Credibility is a complex concept and research shows it is an important factor in the receiver's perception of a message. While credibility research of traditional media has focused primarily on message and source, many other variables involve the receiver and his or her ability to process the message and judge the usefulness of its information (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Recent research on Web site credibility finds users rely on a combination of factors such as design, navigational structure and whether authorship and credentials are readily available for examination (Warnick, 2004).

Jennifer Greer (2003) compared the credibility of an online news story hosted by both the *New York Times* and a personal home page. Source credibility was a significant factor in how subjects in her experiment rated the news story, with the *Times* story rated significantly higher. Recent media use studies have found people who are heavy traditional media users are also more likely to turn to the Internet for information, and they have a good sense of whom to trust for credible information (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000).

Of course, the public's opinion of the mainstream press continues to decline for a number of reasons. A national survey released by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in June, 2005 revealed the public has become increasingly convinced the media are politically biased. However, the survey also contains evidence the public still likes the mainstream press and traditional journalism brands. It supports the watchdog role of the press and would like to see more scrutiny of the government. Thus, the following research hypothesis is made:

- H1: Subjects will find the journalistic ad watch more credible than the third-party ad watch.

Some researchers have blamed negative political ads and ad watches for increased cynicism and low voter turnout (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995, 1996). Others found political ads have a neutral or activation effect (Garramone et al., 1990; Goldstein & Freedman, 2002). The majority of subjects in McKinnon's experimental study of ad watches (1995) felt that ad watches were successful in making them question the accuracy of the ads' claims.

Product advertisers have long known that honest advertising sells products, while hidden tactics and fraudulent claims create skepticism (Koslow, 2000).

Logically, if viewers perceive the journalistic ad watch as more credible, they will be more likely to believe it. Thus, the researcher believes a more credible ad watch will lead to less cynicism and makes the following research hypothesis:

- H2: Subjects who see the journalistic ad watch will exhibit lower levels of political cynicism than subjects who see the third-party ad watch.

Canadian Marshall McLuhan was the first communication scholar to suggest that people react differently to messages placed on different mediums (1964). Since then, channel effects studies have often proved him right, but at the same time they have demonstrated that, as with so many elements of the communication process, the effects are complicated by many intervening variables.

The first channel effects studies compared political messages delivered on traditional media, beginning with newspapers, then radio, then television.

Response differences have been especially dramatic following presidential debates (Katz & Feldman, 1962; McKinnon, Tedesco, & Kaid, 1993; Vancil & Pendell, 1987). Results of these studies and others have clearly demonstrated that some candidates are perceived more favorably on one medium, some on another, although more research is needed to find out why.

Researchers are just beginning to compare political messages delivered on traditional media with those delivered on the Web. McKinney and Gaddie (2000) found viewers who watched a presidential primary debate on the Web learned more about issues than those who watched it on television. When Kaid (2002)

compared exposure to political ads on television and the Web she found a significant effect on candidate voting choices, especially among undecided voters. She also found differences in stimulation of information seeking and political activity. Those who saw political ads on the web were more likely to seek more information. Those who saw them on television were more likely to say they would participate in political activity.

Communication technology research has found evidence that the nature of the Internet can have a positive effect on the perception of message sources (Sundar, Kalyanaraman, & Brown, 2003). This positive effect is attributed to viewers' ability to interact with the source, as in the case of political websites at which visitors are invited to contact or chat with a candidate.

As of this writing, no published research exists comparing the effects of ad watches on television with those on the internet. However, based on prior research on channel effects, the following research hypotheses are made:

- H3: Subjects who see ad watches on Web sites will evaluate the candidates more favorably than subjects who see ad watches on television.
- H4: Subjects who see ad watches on Web sites will respond with higher intentions of information-seeking than subjects who see ad watches on television.
- H5: Subjects who see ad watches on television will respond will be significantly more likely to indicate a likelihood of engaging in political activity than subjects who view ad watches on Web sites.
- H6: Subjects who view ad watches on Web sites will learn more about the candidates than subjects who view ad watches on television.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study compared perceptions of ad watch reports and candidates among subjects who viewed videos on television or on the Web. Those reports were either persuasive or objective. The study also compared the reports' effects in terms of learning, political cynicism, political activities/behaviors, and information-seeking. Ultimately, the study attempted to measure the transfer of attribute salience from the ad watch to the viewer, thus either establishing or disqualifying an attribute agenda-setting effect. Its quasi-experimental design allowed the researcher to determine whether cognitive, affective or behavioral changes took place after four different treatments.

Study Design

Eleven undergraduate communication classes were used for the quasi-experimental study (N= 155). Students enrolled in more than one course section were excluded.

Specifically, students in each class were read a statement (Appendix C) that informed students they were under no obligation to participate. Students then signed consent forms, and upon their collection a pretest-posttest questionnaire was handed out. After all students completed the pretest they were shown a stimulus and immediately asked to complete a posttest.

The researcher used a randomized pretest-posttest (2X2 factorial) design setting temporal precedence, thus establishing or disqualifying association of the

independent and dependent variables (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Wimmer & Dominick, 1997). The research was conducted over the week just prior to the 2004 election. The experiments were administered by the researcher or one of three assistants. This study measured the effects of the independent variables of framing (journalistic or persuasive) and channel (television or the Web) on the dependent variables of credibility, political cynicism, candidate evaluation, information-seeking, political behavior and learning. Table 1 illustrates the study design:

Table 1. Research Design: 2X2 Factorial Design with 4 Test Groups (N=155)

	Journ	Journalistic Ad Watch	Third-Third-party Ad Watch
Television	I (n=	I (n=44)	II (n= II (n=36)
Web Website	III (n=	III (n=37)	IV (n= IV (n= 38)

Dependent variables are credibility, political cynicism, candidate evaluation, information-seeking, political activities/behaviors, and learning.

Test Groups

There were four test groups. Prior to stimulus exposure all test groups were given a questionnaire to determine demographic information, voter characteristics, level of campaign knowledge, and opinions about the candidates. Test Group I saw a journalistic ad watch on television. Test Group II saw a fictitious third-party ad watch on television. Test Group III viewed a journalistic ad watch on a journalistic Web site. Test Group IV viewed a fictitious third-party ad watch on a fictitious third-party Web site. All four test groups were given the same posttest survey containing questions designed to measure stimulus

credibility, candidate evaluation, political cynicism, information-seeking, political activities/behaviors, and learning.

Subjects were randomly selected from two kinds of communication classes at a large southeastern university. Classes that were randomly selected for the video experiments filled a core 1000-level general education requirement for the university. Because the experiments that used the Web sites required computers this necessitated the random selection of classes taught in computer labs. Students in those experiments were enrolled in a 2000-level course inside their communication major.

While the external validity of research conducted on students has often been questioned, there were several reasons for using students in this study. First, students were readily available in classrooms that contained video tape players and computers. Second, students were often unfamiliar with the candidates featured in the ad watch reports. Third, studies have shown students may not have formed clear political preferences (McKinnon, 1995). Fourth, a sample of students allowed the researcher to collect information about political efficacy, behavior and information-seeking among an age group that many believe had an important impact on the 2004 election. Finally, research by Lau and his colleagues (Lau, et al., 1999) has concluded that the use of student subjects does not lead to different results than the use of adult subjects in studies of political advertising effect.

The overall sample was representative of the university student body in terms of ethnicity. Table 2 demonstrates demographics and political affiliations

were evenly divided among test groups. Table 2 also supports the researcher's decision not to utilize a control group, since most students had little prior knowledge of the race or the candidates and there was no significant difference between test groups in campaign and candidate knowledge. Knowledge of the race and candidates was measured by a composite index of five questions on both the pretest (Cronbach's alpha = .62) and posttest. While an ANOVA test revealed a statistically significant difference in mean age between groups that received the video treatment (20) and those that received the web treatment (22), $F(3,153) = 6.69, p = .001$, the researcher was confident this was due to outliers in the form of a few older students taking communication classes inside the major and not likely to affect the results.

Table 2. Test Group Demographics, Political Affiliation and Knowledge

Test Group	n	Percent Males	Percent Females	Mean Age*	Percent Rep.	Percent Dem.	Percent Indpt./ Other	Mean Knwlg.
Journalistic Video	44	50	50	19	33	35	32	1.62
3rd Party Video	36	31	60	21	40	31	29	1.62
Journalistic Web site	37	30	70	22	28	39	33	1.62
3rd Party Web site	38	37	63	22	27	40	33	1.60

* F was significant at $p \leq .05$.

Experimental Stimuli

There were four stimuli holding the two candidates constant. Two of the stimuli were videos, two were Web sites containing those videos. One video and Web site were presented with their original "journalistic" framing. The other video and Web site were designed by the researcher to be "persuasive." The ad

watches related to advertising by the two 2004 U.S. Senate candidates in Florida, Democrat Betty Castor and Republican Mel Martinez.

The journalistic ad watch video and Web site were produced by the NBC affiliate in Orlando, Florida. WESH-TV political reporter Greg Fox called his report a “Truth Test” and compared information in an inoculation ad by Castor with that of an attack ad by Martinez. Castor’s inoculation ad was designed to set the record straight about her handling of a suspected terrorism case while she was President of the University of South Florida (USF). It featured the former USF police chief defending Castor’s suspension of Professor Sami Al-Arian and her cooperation with the FBI. A Martinez attack ad soon followed, criticizing Castor for being soft on terrorism and not taking strong enough action against Al-Arian.

Reporter Greg Fox utilized the visual grammar of ad watches developed by Jamieson and former CNN correspondent Brooks Jackson for the “Political Coverage Project” (*Campaigns for Sale*, 1999).¹ He used “distancing” (p. 49) by placing both ads inside a mock television screen; he used “disclaiming” (p. 50) by attaching the WESH news logo and a notice that the visuals were part of an ad for a particular candidate; he used “displacing” (p. 48) by interrupting both ads to comment on their content.

The researcher was careful to again utilize these formatting methods when turning the reporter’s original ad watch into a persuasive third-party ad watch.

¹ Former CNN correspondent Brooks Jackson wrote “Appendix C” for the brochure cited, and gives reporters like Greg Fox instructions on how to structure ad watches in order to avoid a boomerang effect (pp. 45-50).

Both audio and video elements of the original report were changed. The goal was to make the persuasive version of the video look and sound as though it had been produced by a fictitious third-party group called “Senatewatch.” Full scripts for both versions of the video appear in Appendix A. However, as an example, Table 3 contains one part of the audio that was changed:

Table 3. Journalistic Framing vs. Persuasive Framing

Journalistic Ad Watch (Original, aired on WESH-TV)	Persuasive Ad Watch (Changed by researcher)
“The suspected terrorist is former University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian. He was arrested last year and is charged with raising money for Palestinians who have allegedly killed Israelis and Americas. His self-proclaimed “free speech” activities were videotaped in 1991.”	“The Martinez ad unfairly criticizes Betty Castor for her handling of University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian. It doesn’t give you all the facts about what Betty Castor did to protect Americans from a suspected terrorist. As soon as Betty Castor received information from the FBI, she suspended him without pay. The former federal agent featured in the new Martinez commercial wants you to believe Castor did not do enough to remove Al-Arian, but don’t buy his story.”

Whenever the persuasive ad watch script was lengthened, as in this example, extra video of Al-Arian or Castor was used to cover the audio.

The original WESH-TV Web site was produced by a company that specializes in building and maintaining Web sites for television stations. Although the original Web site contained many hyperlinks to a great variety of textual and video content, the researcher only activated the links that led subjects to the ad watch in question.

The fictitious “Senatewatch.org” Web site created by the researcher was modeled after a real third-party Web site active during the 2004 campaign. The

red, white and blue Web site contained hyperlinks the subjects could activate to learn more about “Senatewatch” and other organizations typically associated with candidates. The site also contained links to the official Martinez and Castor Web sites beneath their respective photos. When subjects clicked on an animated television screen, the persuasive ad watch video downloaded and played within about 5 seconds.

The researcher made every effort to create a credible fictitious Web site through the adoption of the “Stanford Guidelines for Web site Credibility” (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000). Ten guidelines emerged from Stanford web credibility research spanning three years with an overall sample of 4,500 people.² Appendix B contains screen shots of both the objective and persuasive ad watch Web sites. The sites were only available to subjects who entered a password.

Test Instruments

A copy of the pretest/posttest questionnaires can be found in Appendix C. Subjects were asked to complete a portion of the questionnaire before and after exposure to either a journalistic ad watch or persuasive ad watch, on television or on the Web. Test instruments contained a variety of scales and questions already established as reliable in existing political communication literature. Where appropriate, questions were reverse coded in order to create more intuitive interpretations of the dependent measures.

On both the pretest and posttest a series of twelve seven-point semantic differential scales was used to measure report credibility and candidate

² <http://www.webcredibility.org/guidelines/>

evaluation. Subjects were instructed to place their mark between two bipolar adjectives, (e.g. believable-unbelievable, sincere-insincere, etc.) indicating their feeling about the report or candidate. The semantic differential scale used in this study has been successfully used in a number of studies to measure dimensions of candidate evaluation (Kaid, 2004b). Researchers report high levels of reliability when scale items are summed and averaged to create a composite index of candidate evaluation. In this study Cronbach's alpha levels were relatively high (Castor +.81 pretest, +.87 posttest; Martinez +.81 pretest, +.86 posttest). To form a composite index of video credibility only the dimensions of fairness, balance, truthfulness, believability and accuracy were combined and averaged. This index brought an alpha level of .84. Overall, the reliability of the composite index scales was acceptable for the purpose of this study.

Both the pretest and posttest contained a "feeling thermometer" which asked subjects to describe their feelings about both candidates by choosing a "temperature" between zero degrees (cold) and one-hundred degrees (warm). This measurement has a long history of use as a measure of evaluation for political figures in the National Elections Studies (Rosenstone, Kinder, & Miller 1997).

Five forced-choice questions measured campaign knowledge on both the pretest and posttest. These were followed by a series of statements designed to measure political cynicism. Subjects were asked to agree or disagree on a five-point Likert scale. The statements used here were previously used by political

communication researchers to determine levels of trust or confidence in government (Kaid 2002; Kaid, McKinney & Tedesco 2000; Rosenstone, et al., 1997). The statements were both positive (“One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing”) and negative (“One never knows what politicians really think”). Summing and averaging the items to create a composite index brought acceptable levels of reliability (pretest Cronbach’s alpha = +.77, posttest alpha = +.81)

Both the pretest and posttest contained questions about political behavior, asking subjects whether they were registered to vote, intended to vote, had voted in the past and for whom they intended to vote in the Senate race.

The posttest contained an extra set of questions designed to measure political information-seeking on a five-point scale. These questions were designed by Kaid for a study that compared exposure to presidential ads on computers versus television. Subjects were asked if they were very likely-very unlikely to “volunteer for a campaign,” “contribute money to a candidate,” etc.

Manipulation Check

In order to affirm that the journalistic ad watch was perceived as more “objective” and the third-party ad watch was perceived as more “persuasive,” the researcher ran a pilot test to compare the two stimuli. The manipulation check involved two test groups of randomly selected film and communication students. One group saw the journalistic ad watch and the other group saw the third-party ad watch. Both groups evaluated the report they saw on the same seven-point semantic differential scale of bipolar adjectives, measuring the dimensions of slant, accuracy, bias, balance, objectivity and fairness.

While significant differences in the two stimuli were not apparent on each adjective comparison, there were significant differences between groups in the dimensions of objectivity and balance. The group that saw the journalistic ad watch ranked it higher on objectivity ($M=4.40$) than the group that saw the third-party ad watch ($M=3.50$), $t=2.144$, $p=.04$. The group that saw the journalistic ad watch ranked it higher on balance ($M=3.84$) than did the group that saw the third-party ad watch ($M=3.03$), $t=1.807$, $p=.08$. The researcher was satisfied that in the two important dimensions of objectivity and balance, the reliability of the stimuli was acceptable.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Before analyzing the results of the experiments, it is useful to understand some of the background and circumstances of the electoral contest to which the ad watches related. When former Florida governor Bob Graham announced he would retire after eighteen years in the U.S. Senate, one of the most important political contests in the nation began.

Background of Selected Race

Democrats wanted desperately to hold on to the seat. If Republicans took away the seat it would help them do two things. First, it would preserve their slim majority in the Senate. Second, it would bolster the Republican presidential vote in one of the nation's largest battleground states.

Mudslinging ads began early in the primary of a Senate race that contained no incumbent. In a bitter dead-heat, two Republican front-runners emerged. Former Congressman Bill McCollum launched a personal attack against U. S. Housing Secretary Mel Martinez, reminding voters that before he was Orange County Chairman, Martinez was an Orlando "trial attorney." In turn, Martinez accused McCollum of appeasing anti-family causes including "the radical homosexual lobby." Increasingly negative attacks led *The St. Petersburg Times* to rescind its endorsement of Martinez (Hunt, 2004b). But, the White House did everything it could to support him, short of an official endorsement. President Bush starred in a Martinez ad, praising his Cuban-born cabinet member as a

“great American.” Ultimately, Martinez defeated McCollum by fourteen percentage points for the GOP spot on the ticket.

Unlike the Republican race, Democrats had one clear front-runner. Former Florida Education Secretary and University of South Florida President Betty Castor took the lead early. Despite calls for party unity, Democratic Congressman Peter Deutsch launched a television ad blasting Castor for her handling of a USF professor suspected of having ties with terrorists. Other Democrats strongly criticized Deutsch’s attack and Castor won her spot on the ticket by a landslide. However, the attack on Castor’s handling of the suspected terrorism case set the tone for a bitter battle with Martinez in the general election.

Castor’s campaign managers calculated that an early television ad to “inoculate” their candidate against the terrorism issue would spare her attacks closer to the election. Their strategy failed. Martinez launched an ad questioning her decision to put Al-Arian on paid leave for two years. The ad featured a federal investigator saying Castor did not do her job. Castor counter-attacked with an ad featuring a photo of George W. Bush with Al-Arian during the 2000 presidential campaign. Attacks from both sides occupied a substantial portion of televised debates between the candidates, with Castor vowing to remove her ads only if Martinez removed his. Martinez refused. The eventual victor in the tight race was Martinez who won by only one percent, or about 80,000 votes.

Credibility of Ad Watch Reports

To test the first hypothesis which asserted the objective journalistic ad watch would be more credible than the persuasive third-party one, a two-way factorial ANOVA between channel (TV and Web) and ad watch frame

(objective/journalistic and persuasive/third-party) was computed. The dependent variable here was the ad watch credibility index described above. The ANOVA indicated that there was no significant interaction effect between channel and framing in the posttest, $F(1,149) = .56, p=.46$. However, there was a significant main effect for the ad watch frame (objective vs. persuasive), supporting the first hypothesis. Subjects who watched the objective/journalistic ad watch rated it significantly higher (4.83) on credibility than did subjects who watched the persuasive/third-party ad watch (4.37), $F(1,151) = 5.82, p = .02$.

Political Cynicism

The second hypothesis suggested that those who viewed the objective/journalistic ad watch would be less cynical than those who were exposed to the persuasive/third party ad watch. A two-way factorial ANOVA between channel and framing in ratings of political cynicism indicated that there was no significant interaction between channel and framing in the posttest, $F(1,151)=.898, p=.35$. There was no significant main effect for framing on the posttest cynicism index that averaged responses to all statements, $F(1,153)=.250, p=.62$.

Because there was a significant positive correlation between pretest cynicism scores and posttest cynicism scores ($r(153) = .92, p= .001$) change scores were calculated for the pretest-posttest differences. Table 4 illustrates the change score for the difference between the pretest and posttest cynicism index was also not significant. However, in one individual dimension of the index the change score for the difference between the journalistic treatment and third-party treatment was statistically significant ($p<.01$). When subjects responded to the

statement, “Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do,” respondents scored higher if they received the third-party treatment (.19) than if they received the journalistic treatment (-.17).

Table 4. Cynicism Levels by Frame Before and After Treatments

	Posttest Means	Pretest Means	Change Scores
Cynicism Index:			
Journalistic	2.83	2.90	-.07
“Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do.”**	2.18	2.41	-.23
Cynicism Index:			
Third-party	2.80	2.78	.02
“Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do.”**	2.30	2.10	.20

**t was significant at the $p < .01$ level for a 1-tailed test

While the significant difference in change score for one dimension is worth noting, it does not provide enough evidence to confirm the second research hypothesis.

Candidate Evaluation

The third hypothesis predicted that viewing an ad watch on the Web would result in higher candidate evaluation than viewing the corresponding television ad watch. For this hypothesis, the evaluations of the two candidates were analyzed separately, using the composite scale summed from the 12 bi-polar adjectives. As reported above, the use of these scales for both candidates achieved acceptable reliability levels. The two-way factorial ANOVA between channel and framing in posttest ratings of Betty Castor indicated that there was no significant

interaction effect between channel and framing, $F(1,146) = .02$, $p = .89$.

However, the main effect for channel was significant. An analysis of the main effect for channel showed that subjects who saw the ad watch on the Web rated Betty Castor significantly higher (4.76) than did subjects who saw the ad watch on TV (4.31), $F(1,148) = 10.85$, $p = .01$.

The two-way factorial ANOVA between channel and framing in posttest ratings of Mel Martinez also indicated that there was no significant interaction effect between channel and framing, $F(1,147) = .07$, $p = .803$. As it was with Betty Castor, the main effect for channel was significant for Mel Martinez. An analysis of this main effect for channel revealed that subjects who saw the ad watch on television rated Mel Martinez significantly higher (4.24) than did subjects who saw the ad watch on the Web (3.97), $F(1,149) = 4.63$, $p = .04$.

The results described above initially led the researcher to conclude that Castor fared better on the Web, whereas Martinez fared better on television. Had this been the case, the third research hypothesis would have been supported in the case of Castor, but not Martinez. However closer examination of the data revealed this conclusion was not valid. Castor fared significantly better among subjects in the Web site treatment groups *before* the Web site treatments were administered $t(147) = -2.64$, $p = .01$. Martinez fared significantly better among subjects in the television treatment groups *before* the television treatments were administered $t(147) = 1.65$, $p = .05$. Examination of the standardized composite index scores from the semantic differential scales

revealed posttest means had a strong positive association with pretest means for both Castor ($r(147) = .617, p = .001$) and Martinez ($r(147) = .715, p = .001$).

This was also the case when comparing mean temperatures for both Castor and Martinez on the feeling thermometer before and after treatments. *T* tests revealed Castor's temperature was already significantly warmer among subjects in the Web site treatment groups during the pretest $t(148) = -1.80, p = .01$.

Martinez' temperature was already significantly warmer among subjects in the television treatment groups during the pretest $t(146) = 3.05, p = .01$.

Examination of the standardized mean temperatures revealed posttest means had a very strong positive relationship with pretest means for both Castor($r(147) = .808, p = .01$) and Martinez ($r(147) = .891, p = .01$).

Given this situation, change scores for the composite evaluation indexes, individual dimensions of those indexes and the feeling thermometer were then computed and tested for significance. For both Castor and Martinez there was no significant difference in change scores for the composite index or feeling thermometer between television and the Web. When change scores were computed for each individual dimension of the index, there were no significant differences for Martinez between television and the Web. However, there were some significant change score differences between television and the Web for Castor in the dimensions of honesty (.21, .77, $p < .001$), attractiveness (-.68, -.11, $p = .01$), sincerity (.53, .13, $p = .02$) and aggressiveness (-.17, .27, $p = .03$.) These results are listed among those in Table 5. Overall, however, the hypothesis that

those who see ad watches on Web sites will evaluate the candidates more favorably cannot be supported by this study.

Table 5. Candidate Evaluation by Channel Before and After Treatments

	Posttest Means	Pretest Means	Change Scores
Castor:			
Web Index	4.80	4.76	.36
Honest?***	4.10	4.11	.77
Attractive?**	4.01	3.92	-.09
Sincere?*	4.40	4.53	.13
Aggressive?*	4.67	4.66	.27
Television Index	4.12	4.13	.18
Castor:			
Web Temperature	56.97	56.10	8.21
TV Temperature	57.00	56.93	5.69
Martinez:			
Web Index	3.40	3.96	-.72
Television Index	4.30	4.40	-.10
Martinez:			
Web Temperature	44.41	41.22	-3.19
TV Temperature	55.72	52.61	-3.11

*t was significant at the $p < .05$ level for a 1-tailed test

**t was significant at the $p < .01$ level for a 1-tailed test

Information Seeking and Political Activity

The fourth research hypotheses predicted subjects who saw the ad watch on the Web would exhibit higher levels of information seeking. When seven scale items were combined for a composite index of information seeking, the fourth hypothesis was supported. Supporting data for the hypothesis are listed in Table 6. Information seeking among subjects who received the web treatment was higher on six out of the seven scale items, although the difference between web and television treatments was statistically significant on only four of those items. Table 6 provides the mean response for all items.

The fifth research hypothesis predicted subjects who saw the ad watch on television would exhibit higher levels of political activity. Table 6 illustrates this was clearly not the case when five scale items were combined for a composite index of political activity. Political activity among subjects who received the television treatment was lower for all five items in the scale, significantly so for two of those items, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Posttest Channel Comparisons of Information Seeking and Political Activity

	Ad Watch on Television Means	Ad Watch on Internet Means
Composite Index: Information Seeking	3.39	3.60
See more ads	3.18	3.12
Watch news for more information	3.71	3.81
Read newspapers*	3.78	4.14
Contact candidate	1.86	2.15
Use Internet for general campaign information*	3.47	3.84
Use Internet for more information on issues*	4.00	4.31
Go to candidate Web site	3.68	3.89
Composite Index: Political Activity	2.90	3.14
Volunteer for campaign	2.33	2.37
Participate in on-line chat	2.04	2.39
Talk with friends*	3.91	4.38
Vote in next election*	4.37	4.69
Contribute money to candidate	1.73	1.85

*t was significant at the $p < .05$ level for a 1-tailed test

Campaign Knowledge

In order to test the final research hypothesis about higher learning levels from Web exposure, the researcher asked five forced-choice questions about the campaign and candidates. All five questions were averaged to form a composite

knowledge index. The questions were included on both the pretest and posttest so the researcher could evaluate subjects' prior knowledge and take such knowledge under consideration when making posttest comparisons. The researcher performed an ANOVA test to compare existing political knowledge between test groups. There was no significant difference in knowledge between groups before the exposure $F(1,152) = .073, p = .79$, thus it can be concluded the two randomly selected test groups were equivalent in their original knowledge of the race and candidates under study .

The researcher then tested both groups after exposure and found no interaction effect between channel and framing $F(1,151) = 1.249, p = .26$. Nor was there a main effect for channel $F(1,151) = .575, p = .45$ when testing the knowledge index. However as Table 4 indicates, there were statistically significant differences in knowledge when each question was considered individually. Subjects who saw the ad watch on the Web were more likely to know what political seat the candidates were running for, thus supporting the research hypothesis. However, subjects who saw the ad watch on television were more likely to know which candidate had held a federal position. Thus, in the dependent variable of learning, the data reveal mixed results.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The results of this quasi-experimental study reveal main effects in some circumstances for either framing (persuasive or objective) or channel (television or Web). The main effect for framing was found most notably for the credibility attribute. The main effect for channel was found most notably for information seeking and political activity. Most notable overall, the ad watch influenced subjects in its intended direction without a so-called “boomerang effect.” Broadly, the contribution of this study is that it examines how ad watches create affective, cognitive and, ultimately, behavioral effects. This may direct future research toward the study of a variety of attributes specific to ad watches on any media channel framed by journalists, third parties, or other participants in the political process.

Framing and Ad Watch Credibility

The framing of a message depends upon many factors both substantive and structural. Framing may be determined not only by the content of a message but also by its source, organization, relevance to the receiver and the cognitive activation of the receiver’s beliefs (Nelson, Oxley & Clawson, 1997). The central frame of this study’s journalistic ad watch was accountability. Reporter Greg Fox’s “Truth Test” followed Capella and Jamieson’s *visual grammar of ad watches* (1994) with the goal of informing news viewers whether claims in Betty Castor and Mel Martinez ads were misleading. The central frame

of the third-party ad watch was persuasion. The ad watch produced for the fictitious third-party group “Senatewatch.org” used persuasive language with the goal of convincing viewers Mel Martinez’ attacks on Betty Castor were unfair. The manipulation check in which the journalistic ad watch scored significantly higher in the dimensions of objectivity and balance confirmed for the researcher the experimental stimuli successfully represented the “journalistic” and “persuasive” frames described above. Thus, the researcher is confident in the results supporting this study’s first assertion that subjects would find the journalistic ad watch more credible than the third party ad watch.

Before any further explanation of these results a brief examination of credibility as a multi-dimensional concept seems appropriate. Credibility is not a “thing,” rather it is a “perception” and thus a complex concept to measure (Fogg, et al., 2001). If the heart of credibility is believability and trustworthiness, then credibility is an important component of both journalistic and persuasive messages.

In the age of cable and the Internet, viewers have in a sense become their own “gatekeepers,” making many of their own choices about what kinds of messages they receive. However, if the role of journalists as gatekeepers is diminishing their role as authenticators may be growing (Glass, 1996). Results of this study seem to indicate that if viewers first see an ad watch on a political Web site they may later turn to journalistic Web sites when deciding what to believe. Future research could track Web site navigation paths to determine whether

viewers actually do visit journalistic sites after first encountering political ad watches on other Web sites.

In the contemporary media environment cluttered with political and public relations spins of all kinds, scholars agree the role of journalists as authenticators is worth preserving. (Hallahan, 1994). This study offers empirical evidence that ad watches produced within a journalistic frame are more credible. Theoretical implications arise when considering how and why. Future research linked to attribute agenda-setting theory may need to examine not only “what people think about” (Cohen, 1963, p. 13) but also “what people *believe* and *why*.” Beyond Klapper’s limited effects model (1960) this study reminds us that people will be influenced by what they see and hear in the media only to the extent that they believe it.

Of course, in this unprecedented age of information access, deciding whether to believe something or be persuaded by it is no simple matter. Persuasion theorists Petty and Cacioppo (1981) described a system of mapping and organizing in which people go through a cognitive process of incorporating new information into what they already know. Ultimately, voters make reasoned choices through “linguistic discourse” (Hacker, 1995, p. 161) While some of this discourse is interpersonal, most of it now takes place in the media. The media provide shortcuts through the maze of information, one of which is “elite discourse” (Zaller, 1992), which the audience often perceives as credible, and therefore persuasive.

The assumption that people believe a lot of what they see and hear in the media comes out of a status conferral theory. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1960) were the first to suggest that when trusted news anchors reported about someone, that person became someone special. "Specialness" and credibility are inherent values of status conferral (Simonson, 1999). This is a concern for university-based public policy groups (USC/Goldstein, 2002) collecting evidence that more political ads are running during newscasts than political coverage. An ad running inside a news environment has the potential of gaining credibility. Future experimental research could test whether subjects who watched a newscast containing both an ad watch and a political ad were more persuaded by one than the other. It would be interesting to compare results when the ad is placed before the ad watch for one test group and the ad is placed after the ad watch for a second test group.

Although this study's hypothetical assumption did not address channel as a factor in credibility its main effect should be noted, $F(1,151)=5.702, p = .02$. Subjects who viewed either the persuasive or journalistic ad watch on the Web (4.84) perceived that ad watch as more credible than those who viewed it on television (4.37).

New research on Web site credibility was considered when the researcher created the third-party Web site. A large Stanford University quantitative study identified real-world feel, ease of use, expertise, trustworthiness, tailoring, commercial implications and amateurism as attributes which determine perception of Web site credibility (Fogg, et al., 2001). The researcher

incorporated positive credibility attributes listed above into the “Senatewatch.org” Web site while also modeling the influential “Swift Boat Veterans for Truth” using similar colors, structure and organization.¹ However, the fact remains that the WESH-TV Web site containing the journalistic ad watch was produced by a professional company specializing in media Web sites. Less sophisticated third-party Web sites, including the one created for this study could be viewed as “amateurish” when compared with media Web sites. Empirical evidence collected in the Stanford study certainly indicates this could damage perceptions of credibility. Future political communication research could compare these seven attributes on political and media Web sites containing ad watches. While newscasts provide the structural framing of televised ad watch reports, Web sites provide the structural framing of online ad watches. Eveland (2003) reminds us that studying the content of media reports in the context of how they are delivered is important. Eveland believes this “mix of attributes” approach could lead to theories that set communication apart from psychology, sociology and other social sciences.

Beyond theory, the support of the first hypothesis offers practical implications. News organizations should continue producing ad watch reports because this study provides evidence viewers believe them. Viewers know when they are being manipulated. They need a reliable place to turn where claims made by ads are contextualized. The channel effect resulting in higher credibility for ad watch reports on the Web should convince news managers to be sure any

¹ <http://www.swiftvets.com/>

ad watch reports produced for television should at the very least be made available on an accompanying Web site. Newscast producers would do well to point viewers to such Web site reports for a second viewing and those reports should be included in any election promotional material aired on the station or listed in local newspapers.

This study breaks new ground in its examination of what happens when a third party sponsors an ad watch. It was inspired in part by prior research indicating negative ads are more successful when sponsored by a third party (Garramone, 1984,1985; Garramone & Smith, 1984; Kaid & Johnston, 1991). Here, we learn the same success does not appear to hold true for ad watch reports. Third party strategists should heed the warning that voters may not believe an ad watch created in a persuasive frame. Those strategists might do well to provide links to journalistic ad watches rather than creating their own. In the campaign under study here, Betty Castor provided a link to the WESH-TV ad watch on her campaign Web site.

Understandability and Clarity of Ad Watch Reports

Beyond credibility, two other significant differences were found when individual dimensions of the reports were measured. When subjects were asked to rate the ad watch report they viewed as “clear” and “understandable” respectively, the objective ad watch fared significantly better than its persuasive counterpart, and the ad watch viewed on the Web fared significantly better than its television counterpart.

Ad Watch reports are complex, containing numerous visual and text elements threaded together by narration and, in this case, utilizing specific

production elements recommended by Jamieson's (1994) visual grammar of ad watches. Although they were not part of the specific hypotheses in this study, the results in Table 7 provide even more support for political journalism best practices that urge news organizations to produce ad watches and air them on both television and the Web.

Table 7. Clarity and Understandability: Comparing Frames and Channels

	Clear? Means	Understandable? Means
Objective* n=78	5.74	5.53
Persuasive n=75	5.16	4.89
Web* n=78	5.80	5.51
Television n=75	5.18	4.95

*t was significant at the $p < .05$ level for a 1-tailed test

Framing and Political Cynicism

Classic democratic theory describes a society that governs itself through full representation and a free press to hold the government accountable for its performance. The broad concept of "political trust" centers on the performance of government officials and institutions, compared with the public's *perception* of that performance (Craig, 1993; Easton, 1975; Hetherington, 2005). In *Why Trust Matters*, Marc Hetherington (2005) reminds us that when a democracy is made up of majorities and minorities, trust matters because it ensures the "proper representation of all interests" (p. 11). In *The Malevolent Leaders*, Craig (1993) hypothesizes levels of trust and cynicism will vary, depending on whether a person perceives the outcomes of government systems and representatives are consistent with his or her "politicized values" (p. 5).

The concepts of trust or cynicism are complex. While most often considered dependent variables, the result of psychological or social attitudes at any given time, they can also be independent variables, themselves “causing” citizens to engage in the political process or disengage from it. Thus, the concepts are also closely related to political efficacy. On an individual level, feelings of inefficacy might keep a voter home on Election Day. On a collective level, inefficacy could arise from an increase in political distrust while at the same time contributing to that rise. Levels of self-efficacy have been associated with levels of political activity (Citrin, 1974) and levels of media surveillance (Kaye & Johnson, 2002). The second hypothesis of this study made the assumption that subjects who saw a journalistic ad watch would exhibit lower levels of cynicism than subjects who saw a third-party ad watch. This hypothesis was not supported; however data contained here still make an important contribution to this area of research.

As television became the dominant mass medium in the sixties and then the electronic press held the Nixon Administration accountable, the relationship between American citizens and their elected officials has “deteriorated” (Craig, 1993, p. 16). In his widely read treatise on “... *the Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America*,” Robert Putnam (2001) puts the blame for a decline in “civic engagement” squarely on television (p. 39). While Putnam’s conclusion is widely debated, NES data confirm the proliferation of electronic media has been accompanied by a steady rise in political discontent. Many political communication studies (Bennett, 1999; Robinson, 1975, 1976, as cited in Delli

Carpini, 2004) have examined the so-called “media malaise”, aiming to isolate the media’s role in the complex equation of factors leading to citizen disconnect from the political process (Kaid, McKinney and Tedesco, 2000; Robinson, 1976, as cited in Delli Carpini, 2004; Shah, Kwak and Holbert, 2001). However, the results of this study are in line with the body of research that has generally found viewers’ attitudes about politics and government do not change much after exposure to negative ads (Finkel and Geer, 1998; Garramone et al., 1990; Martinez and Delegal, 1990; Pinkleton, 1998; Pinkleton, Um & Austin, 2002; Vavreck, 2000) or ad watches containing negative ads (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1996).

In the overall sample, standardized levels of cynicism before treatment were very strongly related to levels afterward ($r = .981$). When standardized cynicism levels on the posttest were subtracted from those on the pretest slight differences emerged. After treatment, 40 percent of subjects were less cynical, 45 percent were more cynical and 15 percent did not change. These changes were not significantly associated with age, gender, or ethnic background. They also were not significantly associated with party identification. Although higher levels of cynicism have been associated with citizens whose political party was “out of office” at the time (Citrin, 1974) more recent research disputes this connection, since levels of political distrust have been rising over decades through several different administrations (Anderson & LoTempio, 2002). There was a moderately weak negative association between strength of party affiliation and level of cynicism. The weaker the subject’s party affiliation, the higher their

level of cynicism ($r=-.316$). However, with this college student sample it is important to keep in mind that about one-third of subjects reported being “independent” or having no party affiliation at all.

This study hypothesized that framing would make a difference, but it did not. The composite cynicism index mean was virtually unchanged before and after exposure to either the third-party (2.80, 2.80) or journalistic (2.90, 2.80) ad watch report.

A comparison of pretest and posttest cynicism means found little difference in change scores. It did not matter whether subjects saw the objective or third-party ad watch, with one exception. When subjects responded to the statement, “Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do,” they were more likely to have a larger score difference if they received the third-party treatment (.19) than if they received the journalistic treatment (-.17). Thus, it appears that subjects who saw the third-party ad watch felt less politically efficacious, less as if their vote would matter, than those who saw the ad watch in the journalistic form.

The researcher concludes not enough evidence exists in this study to support claims that ad watches produce a demobilization effect. One explanation for this might be that subjects felt both ad watches were effective in their analysis of political ads. Reporter Greg Fox’s journalistic report declared the Martinez ad failed the “Truth Test.” One might expect the report would increase feelings of cynicism or at least distrust. The bigger question here might be “is this kind of cynicism healthy or harmful to democracy?” Certainly the role

of a free press in a democracy is to warn citizens when politicians make misleading or untruthful statements. Citrin (1977) reminds us that the “tendency to demean politics is a well-established cultural tradition in America,” thus, “expressions of cynicism may be purely symbolic” (p. 978).

This study made no predictions about channel differences and it appears none existed. There were no significant pretest-posttest differences in cynicism levels between subjects who saw an ad watch on television (2.91, 2.91) or on a Web site (2.73, 2.65). These results are not surprising, since Kaid's 2002 study of political ads found “neither type of exposure had any significant impact on levels of political cynicism” (Kaid, 2002, p. 31). More research is needed in this area. One study found the association between political trust and Web use for political information was negative (Johnson & Kaye, 1998), while another found Internet use was positively associated with internal efficacy (Davis & Owen, 1998).

The dimensions of “internal” and “external” efficacy are worth elaboration here because they are relevant to the relationship between media use and political trust. Efficacy is determined by what one believes, so internal efficacy refers to what one believes about oneself, whereas external efficacy refers to what one believes about government. The two concepts are positively associated (Craig, Niemi & Silver, 1990), and it is easy to see how media messages could affect both, and how this effect could be stronger or weaker, depending on the individual, the message content, the structure of the message and the channel upon which it is delivered. William Eveland's call for a “mix of

attributes approach” (2003) comes to mind here because it suggests “each medium is composed of a wide variety of attributes” (p. 397) and that the study of media effects should be multi-dimensional.

Political communication scholars of the nineties (Davis, 1997; Margolis, Resnick & Tu, 1997; Selnow, 1998) were hoping the unmediated nature of the Internet would allow a greater variety and quality of political message to be received in a more interactive manner. Optimists believed the Internet could break down communication barriers between candidates, elected officials and the public. In theory, that would spark more internal efficacy, which would result in more external efficacy (Grossman, 1995; Norris, 2000; Rheingold, 1995; Schwartz, 1996; Sparks, 2001). However, a 1998 study by Davis and Owen (1998) found people who use the Internet have more internal efficacy than the public in general. Other researchers (Johnson & Kaye, 1998) have found no such association or even a negative association between political trust and use of the Web for political information. The process by which people receive political information is dynamic and more research needs to be done on how media and individual mediums affect political trust. The bottom line question here is, do political ad watches on the Web or television hurt democracy? Do they demobilize the public by increasing cynicism? This study does not contain much evidence that ad watches in either medium increase political cynicism. It takes its place in the literature among the more recent majority of studies that do not find a demobilization effect of political messages on either the Web or television.

Candidate Evaluation

Central to the study of ad watch reports is their effect on how subjects feel about candidates. It is here that researchers have generally determined whether or not ad watches “work.” The goal of a well-constructed ad watch is to inform voters which candidate is being truthful in his or her political advertising claims or to compare candidates’ truthfulness when they make claims about each other.

Research in this area is particularly critical for three reasons. First, the majority of studies have found that ad watches *do not* “work” because they produce a so-called “boomerang effect,” reinforcing the message of the political ad featured in the report (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995, 1996; Just, et al., 1996; McKinnon, 1995; McKinnon & Kaid, 1999; Pfau & Loudon, 1994). Second, despite this well-documented boomerang effect political communication advocates continue to recommend that news organizations produce ad watches. Ad watches are listed among *Best Practices*² (Tisinger & Jamieson, 2003) established in 2002 by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. Local television stations that produce ad watches more often receive awards for their political coverage.³ Finally, the election season of 2004

² *Political News Web sites: Best Practices in 2002* by Russell Tisinger and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. This is a report from the E4 Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

³ From the Radio Television News Directors Foundations Web site: “The Radio-Television News Directors Association has been honoring outstanding achievements in electronic journalism with the Edward R. Murrow Awards since 1971. Murrow’s pursuit of excellence in journalism embodies the spirit of the awards that carry his name. Murrow Award recipients demonstrate the spirit of excellence that Edward R. Murrow made a standard for the broadcast news profession.”
<http://rtnda.org/asfi/awards/winners04reg.asp>.

saw the advent of ad watches produced by third-party political organizations, primarily on the Internet.

This researcher hypothesized that subjects would evaluate candidates more favorably if they viewed ad watches on Web sites. The assumption arose from the researcher's belief that ad watches would "work" better on the Internet than on television, since the Web encourages more active use and gives users the ability to watch a report more than once. Unfortunately, it appears that sampling error interfered with this study's ability to test this hypothesis. Results clearly indicate subjects who received the television treatment were predisposed to Martinez, while subjects who received the Web treatment were predisposed to Castor. The researcher offers the following explanation for this phenomenon.

Subjects were randomly selected from two kinds of communication classes, determined by the availability of computers. Only classes in the 2000 level or above are taught in computer labs. Thus, students who saw the Web treatments were further along in their coursework than students who saw the television treatments. Table 3 outlines the age and political belief differences between test groups. Subjects who received the television treatment averaged 20 years of age and 74 percent were Republican. Subjects who received the Web treatment averaged 22 years of age and 55 percent were Republican. These differences in age and political party identification could account for the television groups' predisposition for Martinez and the Web groups' predisposition for Castor.

The most important test here is whether Castor's or Martinez' evaluations improved from pretest to posttest. The difference between the posttest mean

and the pretest mean were computed for the composite evaluation index, each individual dimension of that index, and feeling thermometer. There were no significant differences in change scores or temperatures, with three notable exceptions. Table A illustrates that in the dimensions of honesty, attractiveness, sincerity and aggressiveness there were statistically significant change scores from pretest to posttest and Castor fared better on the Web in each dimension.

This study makes its own contribution to this critical area of research. It contains evidence that the ad watch “worked” in both channels and inside both frames. When all treatments are combined exposure to the ad watch clearly has a chilling effect on Martinez, the candidate who failed the report’s “truth test.” As illustrated in Table 7, when overall (N=155) pretest temperatures from the feeling thermometer were subtracted from posttest temperatures, Castor warmed by six degrees and Martinez chilled by three degrees. While these temperature differences are not statistically significant, they are still worth noting. Frequency distributions of Castor and Martinez temperature differences reveal that in the end, 46 percent of subjects felt warmer toward Castor while 38 percent of subjects felt cooler toward Martinez. Females account for almost the entire chill toward Martinez. The results of a one-way ANOVA indicated that there was a significantly strong drop in temperature among females (-5.28) while males warmed to Martinez about half a degree (.35), $F(1,145) = 8.95, p = .003$. The difference in temperature among males and females was not statistically significant for Castor, but it is worth noting that females (7.00) warmed more toward Castor than males (4.94), $F(1,147) = .896, p = .346$. When the

temperature differences were standardized they were not significantly associated with channel, framing, political beliefs or strength of party affiliation.

Table 8. Comparison of Candidate Temperature on Feeling Thermometer

N=155	Pretest	Posttest	Temperature Difference	Percent Change
Castor	54.16	60.60	+6.25	
Warmer				46%
Same				45%
Cooler				9%
Martinez	50.07	47.03	-3.23	
Warmer				9%
Same				53%
Cooler				38%

While prior experimental research has shown ad watches have had a boomerang effect that benefits either of the ads' sponsor, there is no evidence of such an effect here. The results of this study support Capella and Jamieson's arguments (1994, 1997) that a well-constructed ad watch works by informing voters about untrue or deceptive claims made in political ads. It takes its place alongside research conducted by O'Sullivan and Gieger (1995), Leshner (2001) and Min (2002), who also found subjects exposed to ad watch reports could be influenced in the same direction as the report's critique suggested.

The Connections between Information, Awareness and Ad Watch Effects

Ad watch reports are supposed to help viewers make a better informed choice when they go to the polls. Therefore it is important to analyze whether ad watch reports motivate viewers to seek more information, get involved in politics and ultimately, cast a ballot in an election. The present study contains some notable contributions to such analysis. A brief elaboration on the importance of

political information and its role in the political awareness process establishes some context under which those contributions may be considered.

The fact that Americans are generally ill-informed about politics is well documented.⁴ Political scientists often disagree on whether a government is less responsive to a citizenry that is less well-informed (Zaller, 1992; Page & Shapiro, 1993). An individual's "perception" of government performance may matter more than their level of knowledge. Craig (1993) hypothesizes the level of political discontent varies "according to an individual's beliefs about whether the outputs or outcomes produced by the political system are consistent with his/her politicized values" (p. 47). How then, does an individual develop such beliefs and values? Zaller (1992) begins the second chapter of his book on political opinion by explaining "every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition" (p. 6). He goes on to explain political knowledge is not as useful to consider as "political awareness" (p. 17), which is a combination of "general attentiveness to politics" and "levels of information" (p. 18) that result in "knowing" and "understanding" (p. 21). Zaller contends that "the key to political awareness, then, is the absorption of political communications" (p. 21). In other words, it is important to consider not only the level of political information an individual receives, but also his or her ability to understand it. Zaller argues the lower the level of an individual's political awareness, the larger the effect of campaign.

⁴ Anthony Downs is often cited first among a long line of political communication scholars who have gathered evidence in a variety of ways that the public is "rationally ignorant" about politics (1957, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York: Harper). He leads the list in Zaller (1992, p.16-19). See also Niemi and Weisberg (2001, p. 100-105) and Bryant and Zillman, (1994, p. 138-139).

This leads us back to the present study of ad watch reports. The question political communication scholars want answered is, can ad watch reports overcome political ad effects on individuals who possess varying levels of political awareness?

Ad Watch Effects on Information Seeking

Common sense tells us that anyone motivated to seek out information is more likely to absorb it, and then do something with that information.

Communication and cognitive psychology studies indicate that if a person is interested enough in a political race to seek more information about it they are more likely to vote or engage in some other kind of political activity (Eveland, 2002). Atkin, et al., (1973) found this was especially true among early-deciders.

The present study adds evidence that there is a strong relationship between information seeking and political activity ($r=.623$). Of course, the problem with this line of research is that there is little confidence in the *direction* of the effect. Prior studies found Internet users were frequent media users already more engaged in political information and seeking (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). Thus it is hard to say whether their Internet activities were responsible for making them more engaged. This study did not measure media usage. However, the posttest index of information seeking was not significantly associated with the pretest campaign knowledge index. In other words, it did not seem to matter whether subjects knew much about the Senate race before treatment. They were still more likely to seek more information if they saw the treatment on the Web. This provides support for the fourth hypothesis.

This study adds to the growing body of evidence that Internet users are more likely to seek out political information (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Connell, 1997; Kaid, 2002). A composite index of seven scale items was used to compare channel differences. Subjects who saw the ad watch report on the Web were more likely to seek information than those who saw it on television (Table 6). When compared individually, half of the scale items revealed significant or nearly significant differences between channel treatments. (Table 6)

Entertainment value of a televised political ad has been linked to levels of information seeking and political behavior (Atkin, et al., 1973). In this study there is a significant positive association ($r = .230$) between evaluation of the ad watch video and desire to seek information or vote. This seems to indicate that the higher subjects rated the ad watch report, the more likely they were to desire more information. Prior research has suggested television has more potential to stimulate voter activity. In the case of general product advertising, Leong, Huang and Stanners (1998) found that television was better than the Web at stimulating emotion. However in this study, there is a main effect for channel in video evaluation, and the video clearly scores higher among subjects who saw the ad watch report on the web. Interestingly, there is also a main effect for framing in video evaluation and the objective ad watch scores higher. This is an important find for those who are optimistic about the Web's ability to stimulate information seeking.

There were some notable associations between information seeking and some other variables. There was a significant negative association with political

cynicism . Thus, subjects who scored higher on the information seeking index were more likely to score lower on the cynicism index. Kaye and Johnson (2002) found levels of self-efficacy were significantly associated with information seeking and entertainment on the Web (2002). They reported, “those who believe they have a voice in government and have the power to change things are more likely to use political sites for entertainment or information seeking purposes” (Kaye & Johnson, 2002, p. 59).

Ad Watch Effects on Political Activity

The fifth research hypothesis made in this study was inspired by research published in 2002 that compared political ad effects on the Web and on television. Kaid's (2002) quasi experimental research found subjects who saw ads on the Web were more likely to volunteer to work in a candidate's campaign participate in a political electronic chat room, want to contact the candidate directly and contribute money to a political campaign. Those findings were not borne out in the present study. Instead, subjects who saw the ad watch on the Internet were more likely to want to do those things (Table 6).

Kaid notes that Leong, Huang and Stanners (1998) have argued the Web is not as effective as traditional media in terms of general product advertising. They believe the Web is not as emotionally stimulating as television. The present study contains evidence to the contrary, and this may be because subjects may be using their computer screens as “television sets” more often. The advent of DVD-ROMs in computers suggests many people are now using computers to watch movies. Faster processors and internet connections are

allowing Web browsers to download more video and even watch live video streaming of events.

Another explanation may lie in the way this experiment and many other experiments have been conducted in a university environment. Subjects who received the television treatment watched a screen in the front of a classroom.

Subjects who received the Internet treatment watched a computer screen all their own. Considering those settings, the ad watch had more potential to stir emotions among those who saw it on the Web. Indeed, the political activity composite index is significantly associated with the index that evaluated the video ($r=.174$, $p<.05$). There is a strong negative relationship between political activity and political cynicism ($r=-.563$, $p<.01$). This means that subjects who were more likely to participate in political activities exhibited lower levels of political cynicism.

Overall, this is good news for optimistic scholars who believe the Internet has the potential to surpass television in its ability to provide an outlet for civic engagement and political participation. The hope is that “new media use as political participation” could lead to less political cynicism and more citizen involvement in the political process (Bucy & Gregson, 2001, p.222) One of the most significant contributions made by the present study is it provides more evidence that people who are exposed to political communication on the Web are more likely to want to vote in the next election.

Campaign Knowledge

What people learn about political candidates, how they learn it, and how this knowledge factors into voting decisions is clearly a source of great frustration

for political communication researchers. With the exception of a few who contend voters make reasonable choices without much knowledge, political scientists are no source of comfort. Their evidence reveals over and over again that despite rising education levels during the modern electronic media explosion, people do not know very much about politics and television journalists are not very good teachers (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996).

So far in this discussion we have seen there are differences in the way television and the internet affect information seeking and political activity. The final research hypothesis asserted channel would also make a difference in learning. However, the present study found no evidence to support the final hypothesis. The relationship between channel and effects of an ad watch simply do not exist when it comes to the complex process of political learning.

In fact, there were no significant relationships between learning and any other variable in this study, including those used to measure candidate evaluation. This may be due to the fact that there simply was no difference in learning among almost three quarters of the subjects. When subjects from all treatments were combined, 71 percent did not score higher in campaign knowledge after the treatment. A good portion, 17 percent, actually scored lower in the posttest. Only 12 percent learned from the ad watch report they saw on television or the Web. However, this researcher contends that this does not mean subjects in this study were below average intelligence. Nor does it mean the ad watch they saw was poorly written or produced. Two arguments can be used to support this contention.

First, people do not remember much specific information they receive from the media. Recall of facts from a television news report is almost always low. One example comes from a comprehension study of thirteen television news stories by Robinson and Davis (1986). With only minor differences between age groups, scores averaged about 40 percent. Why do people remember less than half of what they see on television news? Psychologists tell us humans do not process information unless they are motivated to do so (Eveland, 2002).

This leads to a second argument, that political learning is much more complex than recall of simple facts about candidates or their campaign. This assumption led Eveland (2002) to develop a “cognitive mediation model” that predicts “attention and news elaboration, in turn, will directly (and also indirectly for attention) lead to learning as reflected in greater knowledge of topics in the news” (p. 29). Eveland contends that communication researchers make a mistake when they search for a direct relationship between motivations and knowledge because the relationship is mediated by attention and elaboration.

If recall of television news reports is low and learning from television news is so complex, what is it about political ads that make them more successful in teaching voters about campaigns (Patterson & McClure, 1976)? Researchers have some answers. Receiver characteristics (Eveland, 2002; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), structure, design (Lang, 1991; Lang & Lanfear, 1990) and emotional impact (Lang, 1991) can affect recall. Television journalists can control all of those elements except one: emotional impact. Television news is expected to be objective, not emotional. Report structure and design are

generally conservative and predictable. What a television news report cannot do that a political ad can is resonate with a viewer's stored information. In *The Responsive Chord*, Tony Schwartz (1973) describes a process in which advertising can "evoke stored information in a patterned way" that stimulates feeling. Political ads can evoke fear, disgust and humor. Such emotions help viewers remember what they saw. Television news reports are not designed to do this. As a result, viewers learn more from political ads than ad watch reports. It is this researcher's contention that those reports are not "bad" or "inadequate." They simply cannot compete for a viewer's attention and emotion.

Theoretical Contribution and Practical Application

This study contributed to the body of knowledge through its original research on two new areas of political communication: ad watches delivered on the Internet, and ad watches produced by third-party political groups. It compares objective and persuasive reports on both television and Web to what scholars already know about political ads and ad watches. The researcher discovered a unique opportunity to hold a real political campaign and media coverage of the campaign constant in order to isolate channel and framing attributes immediately preceding an election. Those attributes were examined under the context of cognitive, affective and behavioral effects. Data from those examinations reveal theoretical and practical implications for the process of voter choice and citizen participation in the political process.

The "system of discussion" first established by the Elmira, New York voter study (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954) as a model for political communication is changing. Candidates still supply the message, and the media

still distribute it, but so do candidates via the Internet. The electorate can now *choose* to consume messages or not. If the choice is made to consume political messages, voters may seek superficial information or great detail. They may trust what they see and absorb it, or they may question its credibility and seek more sources. This implies that the definition of “gatekeeping” is changing in that voters no longer rely on traditional media alone to supply them with information about what is important about a political issue, candidate or campaign. The Internet makes this new kind of campaign consumption possible but also creates new opportunities for candidates and third-party groups to speak more directly to voters with more information and “spin” than ever before.

This researcher found evidence that voters still believe journalistic Web sites are more credible information than third-party Web sites. In the “he-said, she-said” political ad campaign under study here, credibility was particularly important. The implications are that voters will continue to use journalists for “credible gatekeeping.” In this study, subjects recognized a source to which they believe they can turn for objective delivery of political messages. In the changing media landscape, journalists may soon find “credible gatekeeping” becomes their primary function.

While this conclusion may at first seem reassuring, it is more troubling when considered in the context of the “dance” between voters, journalists and sources (Roberts & McCombs, 1994). In 1979 Gans used a tango analogy, saying “either sources or journalists can lead, but more often than not, sources do the leading” (p. 116). During a Texas gubernatorial campaign, Roberts and McCombs (1994)

found a strong positive association between televised political advertising and the television news agenda. As traditional and digital media converge, the intermedia agenda-setting function of the press will likely increase. Just as newspapers have influenced each other and television, the Web is already influencing traditional media. Journalists can track the number of “hits” a political Web site or Web-based ad receives. More hits will likely translate into more journalistic coverage of those sites or ads. In the new age of converged media, the same old sources seem to be leading the dance.

While the selection of stories performs a powerful agenda-setting role, the attributes or presentation of those stories also has an influence on voters. This second-level or attribute agenda-setting provides part of the theoretical underpinning for framing. Persuasive framing of ad watch reports is a new aspect of political communication, taking place primarily on the Internet via e-mail and political Web sites. This researcher asserted subjects would become more cynical after watching an ad watch framed persuasively by a third-party group. While in general this was not the case, one measure of political efficacy supported the assertion. Subjects who saw the third-party ad watch felt less politically efficacious, less as if their vote would matter, than those who saw the journalistic ad watch. While such measures of internal efficacy are positively associated with measures of external efficacy (Craig, Niemi & Silver, 1990) each is different from the general concept of government trust (Craig, 1993). As Craig notes, “the failure to distinguish adequately among attitudes such as trust, external and internal efficacy, and system support accounts for part of our

difficulty in trying to specify the behavioral and systemic consequences of contemporary discontent” (Craig, 1993, p. 169).

The continuing scholarly concern over political cynicism and its effect on democracy is valid and this study makes its own contribution to that body of literature. Researchers have taken several different approaches in trying to pinpoint the effect of political ads on cynicism. Some studies attempted to equate an increase in cynicism with a demobilization effect on voters.

Ansolabehere, et al. (1994) contended attack ads and ad watches had a demobilizing effect. Wattenberg and Briens (1999) believed Ansolabehere and his colleagues exaggerated the demobilization effect. Freedman and Goldstein (2002) conducted a study in which they found negative political ads actually stimulate voting. Clearly, more research in this area is needed. This study is in accord with Ansolabehere and Iyengar’s later (1996) experimental research that found no evidence that ad watch reports change voter attitudes about voting, politics or government. The sample in their experiment “as a whole was not made more hostile or less trustful of politics by such news coverage” (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, p.81). The current study draws the same conclusion from its sample.

If ad watch reports do not have an affective effect on cynicism, that is, they do not make a voter “feel” more or less efficacious, can they have an effect on how voters “feel” about the candidates? Political scientists would say “no” if they took an indirect approach, examining which factors already in place before the campaign most assuredly determine which candidate a voter favors. Instead,

this study takes a direct approach, examining factors taking place during a specific campaign (Niemi & Weisberg, 2001). While experimental results were not statistically significant they do seem to indicate that on television and the Web, framed both objectively and persuasively, ad watches work. They have an affective effect on candidate evaluation. In this case, the ad watch reports made more subjects, particularly females, feel cooler toward the candidate who “failed” the truth test. Therefore, this study has practical implications for both journalists and candidates which should not be over generalized, but are certainly worth noting.

For journalists, this study adds validity to recently adopted *Best Practices* for covering political campaigns which include producing well-constructed ad watch reports for both television newscasts and Web sites. This study adds support to the argument that if political ads increase, journalists have a professional responsibility to increase their coverage of those ads, helping viewers discern which ad claims are true, false or misleading. It reassures journalists who have been concerned their ad watch reports would have a boomerang effect, enhancing the message of the ad being analyzed. The journalistic ad watch examined in this study did not produce a boomerang effect. It seemed to work best when placed on the Web, judging from subjects’ responses indicating the objective ad watch on the Web was significantly clearer and more understandable.

For candidates and their strategists, this study implies ad watch reports can damage the candidate labeled as “untruthful,” especially among female voters.

There is also evidence in this research that ad watch reports can overcome political beliefs and strength of party affiliation. The implication here is that if journalists present compelling evidence that a candidate was untruthful in a political ad, voters may chill toward the candidate despite party loyalty. In the past, campaign strategists have largely dismissed ad watch reports, deeming them ineffective (Bennett, 1997). This study may not provide enough evidence that ad watches are worrisome, but it certainly indicates they should not be ignored.

This study contains new conclusions about whether ad watches help viewers make a better informed choice when they go to the polls. Cognitive effects are often associated with behavioral effects, however in this study one happened without the other. Subjects did not learn much from watching ad watch reports. However, the channel upon which they viewed the reports made a difference in behavior. Proponents of political communication on the Internet can add this study to their growing body of evidence that Web users are more likely to be politically engaged. The data collected and analyzed here clearly increase hope that Web users will want to seek more information about candidates and campaigns. This study also indicates Web users will be more likely to get involved in the political process by volunteering or contributing to a campaign.

Perhaps the most exciting finding is that subjects who saw an ad watch on the Web were more likely to say they wanted to vote in the next election. This places the study in an honorable position with those that have also found an

agenda-setting function that moves beyond awareness to voting behavior (Roberts, 1992).

In summary, this study found that ad watch reports that follow a quality journalistic structure with objective framing work best, and they are most effective when presented on the Web. Ad watch reports do not increase or decrease cynicism, nor do they produce a boomerang effect. When viewed on the Internet, ad watches are likely to increase information seeking and political activity. Ad watching on the Web stimulates voting intent, adding to the body of evidence that journalistic political communication can have a direct effect that encourages participation in the political process.

Limitations and Future Research

Experimental methods have liabilities along with their strengths. Kinder and Palfrey (1993) assert the two shortcomings most associated with experiments are generalizability and artificial setting. The findings of this study can be generalized only to a student population in a metropolitan area of Florida. The design and execution of this quasi-experimental research brought limitations to the interpretation of its results. If a random adult population were tested in a setting more realistic than a classroom there is reason to believe results would be different. The use of self-reported responses is also a limitation. However, the adoption of a well-established semantic differential scale measuring candidate evaluation was intended to add reliability to results (Kaid , 2004) The use of the same Likert scale used by the National Election Studies to measure

political cynicism was also intended to add reliability and replicability to this study.⁵

Future research is needed to test the concept of “credibility gatekeeping” during political campaigns. Do voters ever visit objective journalistic Web sites after viewing persuasive political sites? If so, how often do they visit and how much time do they spend at objective sites versus persuasive sites? What attributes, such as interactivity, audio or video, make a media Web site or a third-party Web site more or less credible? Do certain attributes make ad watches more entertaining and emotionally stimulating? Would such attributes lead to increased cognitive or behavioral effects?

Evidence that sources “lead the dance” between journalists and the public should lead to future research to determine who is leading the latest dance on the Web. Is it journalists, sources or voters themselves?

Ultimately, academicians need to allow political communication theory to lead them to practical methods by which the Web can best be utilized to increase participation in the political process. There is also an urgent need to monitor political candidates and third-party groups who are already using the Web as a persuasive tool. The pervading use of television air time for political advertising currently far outweighs media coverage of such advertising. The traditional medium of choice for voters who want information about politics has been thrown out of balance. As V.O. Key Jr. (1996) asserted in 1966, “voters are not fools.” (p. 7). Future academic research should lead journalists to the practice of

⁵ The National Election Studies are sponsored each year by the National Science Foundation and available at <http://www.umich.edu/~nes/>

offering an objective, credible and factual counterbalance to political ads now migrating from the television screen to the computer screen.

APPENDIX A
STIMULI SCRIPTS

Journalistic (objective) ad watch script

<i>Video</i>	<i>Audio</i>
Video/Audio of Martinez spot inside TVset GFX	(Martinez ad) "As university president, I took action to remove a suspected terrorist from our campus." The announcer says, "Unfortunately, that's wrong."
Ad squeezes back and we see Greg on camera	
Video of Al-Arian being arrested	(Greg standup) This new ad comes in response to an earlier Castor ad.
Video of Al-Arian at podium	(Greg Voiceover) The "suspected terrorist" is former University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian. He was arrested last year and is charged with raising money for Palestinians who have allegedly killed Israelis and Americans. His self-proclaimed "free speech" activities were videotaped in 1991.
Video of Betty Castor and Al-Arian	
Greg on camera	
Martinez ad in TV gfx	(sot translator/Al-Arian) "Let us damn America. Let us damn Israel"
Greg on camera	(Greg Voiceover) After receiving information from the FBI in 1996, Castor suspended Al-Arian with pay but she did not fire him.
	(Greg Standup) The Martinez commercial features a former federal agent who claims Castor did not do enough to remove

<p>Castor ad in TV Gfx</p> <p>Greg on camera</p> <p>Photo of Al-Arian with Bush</p> <p>Greg on camera</p>	<p>Al-Arian and at least two other teachers with alleged terrorist ties.</p> <p>(Martinez ad) "I'm Bill West. When I was a special agent with the federal INS, I launched the criminal investigation into the terrorist activity at the University of South Florida. As university president, Betty Castor's lack of strong leadership allowed a dangerous situation to get worse."</p> <p>(Greg Standup) The WESH NewsChannel 2 Truth Test finds the federal agent fails to mention what, if any, information he provided to Castor. As for the line "Betty Castor allowed a dangerous situation to get worse," the "truth meter" rings false. The ad gives no proof that Castor's actions to keep Al-Arian on the payroll led to any specific act of terrorism or jeopardized campus safety. Castor was a school president, not a law enforcement officer. Her new ad features the university's former police chief.</p> <p>(Castor Ad) He says, "I was there as police chief when Betty Castor worked with the FBI. She ensured the safety of the campus, monitored and suspended the suspect."</p> <p>(Greg Standup) Castor's successor did fire Al-Arian, but that was after Sept. 11, 2001, and the passage of the Patriot Act, which gave the U.S. government new power to deal with suspected terrorists. What the Martinez ad doesn't show you</p>
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	<p>(Greg Voiceover) is a photo of Al-Arian at the Strawberry Festival in Central Florida in 2000. Next to him are George and Laura Bush. Al-Arian was later invited to the White House,</p> <p>(Greg Standup) making it hard for Martinez to argue that Castor was any less effective at dealing with suspected terrorists than his Republican friends in Washington. With the Newschannel 2 Truth Test I'm Greg Fox Reporting.</p>
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Third-party (persuasive) ad watch script

<i>Video</i>	<i>Audio</i>
<p>Video/Audio of Martinez spot inside TVset GFX</p> <p>Ad squeezes back and we see Greg on camera</p> <p>Video of Al-Arian being arrested</p> <p>Video of Betty Castor</p> <p>Video of Al-Arian at podium</p> <p>Martinez ad in TV gfx</p> <p>Greg on camera</p>	<p>(Martinez ad) "As university president, I took action to remove a suspected terrorist from our campus." The announcer says, "Unfortunately, that's wrong."</p> <p>(Greg standup) This new ad comes in response to an earlier Castor ad.</p> <p>(Greg Voiceover) (new 10/14)The Martinez ad unfairly criticizes Betty Castor for her handling of University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian. It doesn't give you all the facts about what Betty Castor did to protect Americans from a suspected terrorist. As soon as Betty Castor received information from the FBI, she suspended him without pay. The former federal agent featured in</p>

(you'll have to b-roll his retrack at the top of this standup)	the new Martinez commercial wants you to believe Castor did not do enough to remove Al-Arian, but don't buy his story.
More Al-Arian Video	<p>(Martinez ad)</p> <p>"I'm Bill West. When I was a special agent with the federal INS, I launched the criminal investigation into the terrorist activity at the University of South Florida. As university president, Betty Castor's lack of strong leadership allowed a dangerous situation to get worse."</p>
Castor ad in TV Gfx	<p>(Greg Standup)</p> <p>(New 10/14) Our Senatewatch Truth Test finds the federal agent fails to mention what, if any, information he provided to Castor.</p>
Greg on camera	<p>As for the line "Betty Castor allowed a dangerous situation to get worse," the "truth meter" rings false. The ad gives no proof that Castor's actions to keep Al-Arian on the payroll led to any specific act of terrorism or jeopardized campus safety.</p>
Photo of Al-Arian with Bush	<p>(new10/18)The truth: law enforcement officers never provided Castor with the evidence necessary to terminate Sami Al-Arian. He was not indicted until last year, long after Betty Castor had left the University of South Florida. Even Tampa's former FBI chief says Castor did all she could at the time.</p>
Greg on camera	<p>Castor was a school president, not a law enforcement officer. Her new ad features the university's former police chief.</p>
Greg vo of Al-Arian	<p>(Castor Ad)</p> <p>He says, "I was there as police chief</p>

when Betty Castor worked with the FBI. She ensured the safety of the campus, monitored and suspended the suspect."

(Greg Standup)

What the Martinez ad doesn't show you

(Greg Voiceover)

is a photo of Al-Arian at the Strawberry Festival in Central Florida in 2000. Next to him are George and Laura Bush. Al-Arian was later invited to the White House,

(Greg Standup)

making it hard for Martinez to argue that Castor was any less effective at dealing with suspected terrorists than his Republican friends in Washington.

(new 10/18)If the White House was not alarmed about Al-Arian, how could Castor be expected to do more? This Martinez ad fails the SenateWatch Truth Test. Martinez is guilty of distortion and misrepresentations of Betty Castor's commendable record. Reporting for senatewatch-dot-org, I'm Greg Fox.

APPENDIX B
STIMULI WEB SITES

Journalistic (objective) Web site

First link:

The screenshot shows the homepage of WESH 2 NewsChannel 2. At the top, there are navigation links for "Part of The IBS Network", "Contact the Station", "Sign up for E-News", and a search bar. The main header features the "2 WESH.COM" logo with the tagline "WHERE THE NEWS COMES FIRST" and a photo of the news anchors. Below the header is a horizontal menu with categories like "Home", "News", "Weather", "Sports", "Talk To 2", "Health", "Consumer Watch", "Politics", "Entertainment", "Tech", and "WESH". A secondary menu includes "Positively Central Florida", "Garden Rebel", "Education", "Connect!", "House & Home", "Golf Tee Times", "Real Estate", "Shopping", "Auto", and "Weddings".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- NEWSCHANNEL 2 TOP STORIES:** A featured article titled "Tornado Photos May Save Future Lives" with a photo of a tornado. The text is updated and mentions that the National Weather Service is snapping up photos and videos of Wednesday's tornado. It includes a "Slideshow: Tornado Hits" link and a "Video: Home Video Of Twister" link.
- No Nudes Is Good Nudes: Wal-Mart Refuses 'Daily Show' Book:** An article about Wal-Mart's refusal to carry a book by Jon Stewart and "The Daily Show" writers. It includes a "Survey: Your Thoughts On Jon Stewart?" link.
- Orlando Weather.com:** A section for "Current Conditions" in Orlando, showing 81°F and light rain, with a "WESH Desktop Alert" option.
- WESH TV PROGRAMMING:** A section for "Meet The Candidates" with a "2004 COMMITMENT" logo and links to "More: 2004 Proposed Constitutional Amendments" and "Inside: More Political Headlines".
- Weather Headlines:** A section with links for "The Colors Of Fall", "Meet The 'Weather Babies'", and "Friday: Partly Sunny, Isolated".

Second link:

The screenshot shows a news article on the WESH 2 website. The article is titled "Truth Test: Did Castor Mishandle Suspected Terrorist?" and has a sub-headline "Martinez's New Ad Raises Questionable Claims About Castor". It is dated October 7, 2004, and posted at 3:33 pm EDT. The article is about a U.S. Senate race in Orlando, Florida, where Republican candidate Mel Martinez is questioning Democrat Betty Castor's handling of a suspected terrorist. The article includes a video player with the title "Truth Test: Did Castor Mishandle Suspected Terrorist?".

Truth Test: Did Castor Mishandle Suspected Terrorist?
Martinez's New Ad Raises Questionable Claims About Castor

POSTED: 3:33 pm EDT October 7, 2004
UPDATED: 6:02 pm EDT October 7, 2004

ORLANDO, Fla. -- Safety and terrorism are key issues in U.S. Senate race to replace retiring Sen. Bob Graham.

Republican candidate Mel Martinez has been blasting Democrat Betty Castor in his TV ad for her handling of a suspected terrorist, WESH NewsChannel 2 reported.

Martinez' commercial quotes Castor as saying, "As university president, I took action to remove a suspected terrorist from our campus." The announcer says, "Unfortunately, that's wrong."

This new ad comes in response to an earlier Castor ad.

The "suspected terrorist" is former University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian. He was arrested last year and is charged with raising money for Palestinians who have allegedly killed Israelis and Americans. His self-proclaimed "free speech" activities were videotaped in 1991.

"Let us damn America. Let us damn Israel," he is heard saying.

Third link to video:



Third-party (persuasive) Web site

First link:

Senatwatch.org

- [Home](#)
- [Who we are](#)
- [Mission](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Join our Mailing List

Mission Statement:

SenateWatch.Org is dedicated to providing the latest news and discussion about the 2004 Florida Senate campaign from a progressive perspective. We will cover political ads from both candidates, but our aim is to make sure one of Florida's most critical elections results in sending a proven and compassionate public servant to Washington.

Take Action!

We urge you to visit the websites of both candidates to examine their backgrounds and stances on issues important to all citizens of Florida: education, the environment and economic growth.

About the Candidates

Betty Castor
www.betty.net.com

Mel Martinez
www.melforsenate.org



Continues as subject scrolls down:

www.melforsenate.org

Important Links

U.S. Senate
www.senate.org

MoveOn
www.moveon.org

Environmental Victory Project
www.envirovictory.org

League of Conservation Voters
www.lcv.org

NEA
www.nea.org

FEA
www.feaweb.org

The Media Fund
www.makeam.com

Safer World
www.saferworld.org



[Mel Martinez](#) [Betty Castor](#)

View our Ad Watch.

Click on the video icon below to find out whether the claims being made in a recent political advertisement are misleading:



Second link to video:



APPENDIX C
EXPERIMENT OPENING STATEMENTS

Opening statement for television treatments

(Pass out consent forms.)

May I have your attention please? (Wait until everyone is looking forward).

Hello, my name is _____ and I'd like to begin by thanking you if you decide to participate. We'll begin with the consent form in just a moment, but before you sign those, please listen carefully. If you participate you'll see my questionnaire is really an "opinionnaire" that contains a wide range of statements different people have made about candidates and politics. There are no right or wrong answers in a factual sense, and your answers will be kept anonymous and used for research purposes only. You will not be penalized if you decide not to participate, but I hope you will. Now, I'd like to ask you to read the consent form on your desk and sign it if you would like to be a part of this research.

(Collect forms)

Thank you for your participation. Before I pass out the questionnaires I want to remind you there are no right or wrong answers. All of the items are matters of opinion, so give your initial reaction quickly without wasting time looking for some logical clues to answers. Just choose the answer that comes closest to expressing your opinion on the matter. Work rapidly and be spontaneous. Please follow the instructions carefully. When you have all finished the first part of the questionnaire we'll move forward to the second part together. Please do not talk to each other during this activity. If you finish before your classmates you may read, but please refrain from talking.

(Pass out questionnaires)

(Watch for when everyone has turned over their survey)

Is everyone finished with the first part of this activity? OK. Please watch this video. Please do not look through the remaining pages of the questionnaire while you are watching the video.

(Play video)

OK. You may now complete your questionnaire. I will collect all of them together when everyone is finished. Please refrain from talking with your classmates until I have collected the questionnaires at the end.

(Collect questionnaires)

Thank you again for your participation. Research indicates that during a presidential election season, viewers see three times as many political ads as they do television news reports on politics. The purpose of this research is to test the effectiveness of news reports about political ads, and to compare such coverage on television and on the web. Without your cooperation, such research would not be possible, so we want to thank you again and we want to thank Professor _____ for allowing us so many precious minutes of his/her class time.

Opening statement for Web site treatments

(Pass out consent forms)

May I have your attention please? (Wait until everyone is looking forward).

Hello, my name is _____ and I'd like to begin by thanking you if you decide to participate. We'll begin with the consent form in just a moment, but before you read those, please listen carefully. If you participate you'll see my questionnaire is really an "opinionnaire" that contains a wide range of statements different people have made about candidates and politics. There are no right or wrong answers in a factual sense, and your answers will be kept anonymous and used for research purposes only. You will not be penalized if you decide not to participate, but I hope you will. Now, I'd like to ask you to read the consent form on your desk and sign it if you would like to be a part of this research.

(Collect forms)

Thank you for your participation. Before I pass out the questionnaires I want to remind you there are no right or wrong answers. All of the items are matters of opinion, so give your initial reaction quickly without wasting time looking for some logical clues to answers. Just choose the answer that comes closest to expressing your opinion on the matter. Work rapidly and be spontaneous. Please follow the instructions carefully. When you have all finished the first part of the questionnaire we'll move forward to the second part together. Please do not talk to each other during this activity. If you finish before your classmates you may read, but please do not do anything with the computers because they are already set up for the second part of this activity.

(Pass out questionnaires)

(Watch for when everyone has placed their questionnaire on top of their computer monitor.)

Is everyone finished with the first part of this activity? OK. You may turn past the blank page and continue. You'll find some instructions for locating and examining a website. Please follow the instructions carefully and do not visit any other websites or check email during this activity. I will collect all of the questionnaires together when everyone is finished. Thanks for your cooperation. You may begin.

(Collect questionnaires)

Thank you again for your participation. Research indicates that during a presidential election season, viewers see three times as many political ads as they do television news reports on politics. The purpose of this research is to test the effectiveness of news reports about political ads, and to compare such coverage on television and on the web. Without your cooperation, such research would not be possible, so we want to thank you again and we want to thank Professor _____ for allowing us so many precious minutes of his/her class time.

APPENDIX D
SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Survey instrument journalistic (objective) television treatment

Video 1 Questionnaire

Cel Number _____

Subject Number (last 4 digits of social) _____

In the following questionnaire, you will be asked to judge political candidates on seven-point scales. In the following example, if you think a candidate is very unqualified you would mark an "x" beneath the number "1," like this:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
UNQUALIFIED: <u>X</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:	QUALIFIED

On the other hand, if you think a candidate is very qualified you would mark an "x" beneath the number "7," like this:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
UNQUALIFIED: _____	:	:	:	:	:	:	QUALIFIED: <u>X</u>

If you think the candidate is between these two extremes, you would mark an "x" beneath the number "4" to indicate your neutrality. Please react to the candidates on each of the scales below:

1. Betty Castor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
UNQUALIFIED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:QUALIFIED
SOPHISTICATED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNSOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:HONEST
BELIEVABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:FRIENDLY
SINCERE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:INSINCERE
EXCITABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:CALM
UNAGGRESSIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:AGGRESSIVE
WEAK	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:STRONG
ACTIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Betty Castor on the feeling thermometer below. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward her. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward her and that you don't care too much for her. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate her at the 50 degree mark.

Unfavorable/Cold	Favorable/Warm
0-----	-----100
-----50-----	

Write in your choice of degrees for Betty Castor: _____ degrees

2. Mel Martinez

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
UNQUALIFIED							:QUALIFIED
SOPHISTICATED							:UNSOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST							:HONEST
BELIEVABLE							:UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL							:SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE							:UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY							:FRIENDLY
SINCERE							:INSINCERE
EXCITABLE							:CALM
UNAGGRESSIVE							:AGGRESSIVE
WEAK							:STRONG
ACTIVE							:INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Mel Martinez on this feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward him. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward him and that you don't care too much for him. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate him at the 50 degree mark.



Write in your choice of degrees for Mel Martinez: _____ degrees

Please circle only one answer for each question below.

3. What political seat are the above two candidates running for?

- a). U.S. Congress
- b). U.S. Senate
- c). State legislature
- d). Local office

4. Which of the candidates is a Republican?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

5. Which of the candidates is a Democrat?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

6. Which of the candidates formerly held a *state* political position?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

7. Which of the candidates formerly held a *federal* political position?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

Following are some statements about politics and politicians. For each one, please circle whether you strongly agree, agree somewhat, have no opinion, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree.

8. "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do."

- a).SA
- b) AS
- c).NO
- d).DS
- e). SD

9. "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
10. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
11. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
12. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
13. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
14. "One never knows what politicians really think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
15. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
16. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
17. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
18. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
19. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself connecting the information to ideas I had before.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
20. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
21. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
22. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
23. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
24. If a friend asked me about the general election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

Now you will be asked some questions about yourself. Circle the best answer or fill in the blank provided.

26. Are you male or female?

- a). male
- b). female

27. Which of the following best represents your ethnic background?

- a). Asian or Pacific Islander
- b). Non-Hispanic White (Caucasian)
- c). African-American
- d). Spanish or Hispanic origin
- e). Multi-racial or mixed race
- f). Native American

28. Please write in your age as accurately as you can in years and months, rounding up to the next month. For example, if you were born in September of 1984, you would indicate 20 years and 1 month.

_____years _____months

29. Which of the following best represents your political beliefs?

- a). Republican
- b). Democrat
- c). Independent
- d). Other (name)_____

30. Thinking of the party affiliation that you have just identified, please mark the **strength of your affiliation** below.

strong:_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : weak

31. Are you registered to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
- b). no

32. Did you vote in the last local, state or national election?

- a). yes
- b). no, registered, but did not vote
- c). no, not registered

33. Do you intend to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
- b). no

34. If the general election were held today, for whom would you vote? Select ONE choice.

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

STOP HERE. DO NOT LOOK AT THE NEXT PART OF THIS SURVEY. WHEN EVERYONE IS FINISHED YOU WILL VIEW A VIDEO AND THEN COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Video Questionnaire Continued...

Please think for a moment about the political report you just watched. Please react to the report on each of the scales below:

		<u>Video Evaluation</u>							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
UNCLEAR	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	: CLEAR
INFORMATIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	: NOT INFORMATIVE
UNFAIR	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	: FAIR

Please give us your feelings toward Mel Martinez on this feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward him. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward him and that you don't care too much for him. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate him at the 50 degree mark.

Unfavorable/Cold

Favorable/Warm

0-----50-----100

Write in your choice of degrees for Mel Martinez: _____ degrees

Please circle only one answer for each question below.

4. What political seat are the above two candidates running for?
 - a). U.S. Congress
 - b). U.S. Senate
 - c). State legislature
 - d). Local office

5. Which of the candidates is a Republican?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

6. Which of the candidates is a Democrat?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

7. Which of the candidates formerly held a *state* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

8. Which of the candidates formerly held a *federal* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

9. Which of the candidates do you feel lied the most?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

10. Which of the candidates do you feel was the most truthful?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

For the next section please mark only one choice.

11. If you were voting in an election based on the video you just saw, how likely would you be to vote for Betty Castor?
 - a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.

12. If you were voting in an election based on the video you just saw, how likely would you be to vote for Mel Martinez?
 - a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion

- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

Please indicate your level of interest in the following activities by circling only one choice.

13. See more political ads on television or on the Internet.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
14. Watch television news for more information about political campaigns.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
15. Volunteer for a political campaign.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
16. Participate in an on-line chat about politics.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
17. Talk with friends about politics.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
18. Read newspapers for more information about political campaigns.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
19. Contact political candidates by telephone or e-mail.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
20. Use the Internet for general campaign information.
- a. very likely

- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

21. Vote in the next election.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

22. Contribute money to a candidate.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

23. Use the Internet to obtain more information about issues.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

24. Visit a candidate Website.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

Earlier you gave us some of your feelings about politics and politicians. We'd like to get your opinions again on these same items. For each one, please circle whether you strongly agree, agree somewhat, have no opinion, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree.

25. "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do."

- a).SA
- b) AS
- c).NO
- d).DS
- e). SD

26. "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

- a).SA
- b) AS
- c).NO
- d).DS
- e). SD

27. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."

- a).SA
- b) AS
- c).NO
- d).DS
- e). SD

28. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."

- a).SA
- b) AS
- c).NO
- d).DS
- e). SD

29. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."

- a).SA
- b) AS
- c).NO
- d).DS
- e). SD

30. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."

- a).SA
- b) AS
- c).NO
- d).DS
- e). SD

31. "One never knows what politicians really think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
32. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
33. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
34. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
35. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
36. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself tying the information to ideas I had before.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
37. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
38. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
39. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
40. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
41. If a friend asked me about the general election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED PLEASE TURN OVER YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE AND WAIT FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

To be cut on the line below by the researcher:

Subject Number _____ Cell Number _____

NOTE: THIS SHEET WILL BE DETACHED AND YOUR SURVEY RESPONSES WILL NOT BE IDENTIFIED BY YOUR NAME OR ANY INFORMATION PROVIDED BELOW.

As the political campaign continues to develop, we would like to be able to contact you again (via e-mail) to learn what you are thinking about the campaign and candidates. If you are willing to be contacted again by the researcher, please provide the following information:

E-Mail Address (*please write legibly*):

10. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
11. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
12. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
13. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
14. "One never knows what politicians really think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
15. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
16. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
17. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
18. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
19. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself connecting the information to ideas I had before.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
20. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
21. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
22. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
23. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
24. If a friend asked me about the general election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

Now you will be asked some questions about yourself. Circle the best answer or fill in the blank provided.

26. Are you male or female?
a). male
b). female

27. Which of the following best represents your ethnic background?

- a). Asian or Pacific Islander
- b). Non-Hispanic White (Caucasian)
- c). African-American
- d). Spanish or Hispanic origin
- e). Multi-racial or mixed race
- f). Native American

28. Please write in your age as accurately as you can in years and months, rounding up to the next month. For example, if you were born in September of 1984, you would indicate 20 years and 1 month.

_____years _____months

29. Which of the following best represents your political beliefs?

- a). Republican
- b). Democrat
- c). Independent
- d). Other (name)_____

30. Thinking of the party affiliation that you have just identified, please mark the **strength of your affiliation** below.

strong:_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ :weak

31. Are you registered to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
- b). no

32. Did you vote in the last local, state or national election?

- a). yes
- b). no, registered, but did not vote
- c). no, not registered

33. Do you intend to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
- b). no

34. If the general election were held today, for whom would you vote? Select ONE choice.

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

STOP HERE. TURN THE SURVEY TO THE NEXT BLANK PAGE AND PLACE IT ON THE TOP OF YOUR COMPUTER MONITOR. DO NOT LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT SECTION OF THIS SURVEY UNTIL YOU ARE DIRECTED TO DO SO.

(Blank Page)

Website Feedback

We would now like to ask for your feedback on a website. Please follow these instructions carefully, step by step. If at any time you aren't sure what to do or you cannot find a specified link, please quietly raise your hand.

- 1). Double click on the Internet Explorer Icon the computer desktop

- 2). Visit the UCF WebCT site at <http://webct.ucf.edu>
- 3). Logon, using your WebCT ID and password
- 4). Click on the link for RTV 3304, Electronic Journalism II
- 5). Click on the button that says "Survey 1"
- 6). The home page for WESH.com will appear. Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the site, selecting any links you choose.
- 7). Click on the button labeled "Politics. " This grey button is located beneath the photo of the news anchors, between "Consumer Watch" and "Entertainment." If you cannot locate this button, raise your hand.
- 8). After the "Politics" page appears, scroll down to "Politics Headlines" and select the link labeled "Castor Martinez Battle in First Debate"
- 8) Put on the headphones provided at your computer. (There is a volume icon that looks like a speaker on the lower right corner of your screen if you need to make adjustments). Double click on the "Truth Test" Video in the center of the page. A Real Player box will appear. Click on the "play" button. Watch and listen carefully to the video (only one time).
- 9). When you are finished viewing the video, remove your headphones and complete the rest of the questionnaire.

WEAK _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:STRONG
 ACTIVE _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Mel Martinez on this feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward him. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward him and that you don't care too much for him. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate him at the 50 degree mark.

Unfavorable/Cold 0-----50-----100 **Favorable/Warm**

Write in your choice of degrees for Mel Martinez: _____degrees

Please circle only one answer for each question below.

4. What political seat are the above two candidates running for?
 - a). U.S. Congress
 - b). U.S. Senate
 - c). State legislature
 - d). Local office

5. Which of the candidates is a Republican?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

6. Which of the candidates is a Democrat?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

7. Which of the candidates formerly held a *state* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

8. Which of the candidates formerly held a *federal* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

9. Which of the candidates do you feel lied the most?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

10. Which of the candidates do you feel was the most truthful?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

For the next section please mark only one choice.

11. If you were voting in an election based on the video you viewed inside the website, how likely would you be to vote for Betty Castor?
 - a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.

12. If you were voting in an election based on the video you viewed inside the website, how likely would you be to vote for Mel Martinez?

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

Please indicate your level of interest in the following activities by circling only one choice.

13. See more political ads on television or on the Internet.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

14. Watch television news for more information about political campaigns.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

15. Volunteer for a political campaign.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

16. Participate in an on-line chat about politics.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

17. Talk with friends about politics.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

18. Read newspapers for more information about political campaigns.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

19. Contact political candidates by telephone or e-mail.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion

- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

20. Use the Internet for general campaign information.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

21. Vote in the next election.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

22. Contribute money to a candidate.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

23. Use the Internet to obtain more information about issues.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

24. Visit a candidate Website.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

Earlier you gave us some of your feelings about politics and politicians. We'd like to get your opinions again on these same items. For each one, please circle whether you a). strongly agree, b). agree somewhat, c). have no opinion, d). disagree somewhat, or e). strongly disagree.

25. "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do."

- a).Strongly Agree b) Agree Somewhat c).No Opinion d).Disagree Somewhat e).Strongly Disagree

26. "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

27. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

28. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

29. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

30. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
31. "One never knows what politicians really think."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
32. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
33. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
34. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
35. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
36. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself connecting the information to ideas I had before.
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
37. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
38. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
39. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
40. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
41. If a friend asked me about the general election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, TURN OVER YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE AND PLACE IT ON TOP OF YOUR COMPUTER MONITOR. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

To be cut on the line below by the researcher:

Subject Number _____ Cell Number _____

NOTE: THIS SHEET WILL BE DETACHED AND YOUR SURVEY RESPONSES WILL NOT BE IDENTIFIED BY YOUR NAME OR ANY INFORMATION PROVIDED BELOW.

4. Which of the candidates is a Republican?
 a). Betty Castor
 b). Mel Martinez

5. Which of the candidates is a Democrat?
 a). Betty Castor
 b). Mel Martinez

6. Which of the candidates formerly held a *state* political position?
 a). Betty Castor
 b). Mel Martinez

7. Which of the candidates formerly held a *federal* political position?
 a). Betty Castor
 b). Mel Martinez

Following are some statements about politics and politicians. For each one, please circle whether you strongly agree, agree somewhat, have no opinion, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree.

8. "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

9. "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

10. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

11. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

12. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

13. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

14. "One never knows what politicians really think."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

15. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

16. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

17. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

18. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."
 a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

19. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself connecting the information to ideas I had before.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

20. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

21. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

22. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

23. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

24. If a friend asked me about the general election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

Now you will be asked some questions about yourself. Circle the best answer or fill in the blank provided.

26. Are you male or female?

- a). male
b). female

27. Which of the following best represents your ethnic background?

- a). Asian or Pacific Islander
b). Non-Hispanic White (Caucasian)
c). African-American
d). Spanish or Hispanic origin
e). Multi-racial or mixed race
f). Native American

28. Please write in your age as accurately as you can in years and months, rounding up to the next month. For example, if you were born in September of 1984, you would indicate 20 years and 1 month.

_____years _____months

29. Which of the following best represents your political beliefs?

- a). Republican
b). Democrat
c). Independent
d). Other (name)_____

30. Thinking of the party affiliation that you have just identified, please mark the **strength of your affiliation** below.

strong:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:weak

31. Are you registered to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
b). no

32. Did you vote in the last local, state or national election?

- a). yes
- b). no, registered, but did not vote
- c). no, not registered

33. Do you intend to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
- b). no

34. If the general election were held today, for whom would you vote? Select ONE choice.

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

STOP HERE. DO NOT LOOK AT THE NEXT PART OF THIS SURVEY. WHEN EVERYONE IS FINISHED YOU WILL VIEW A VIDEO AND THEN COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Video Questionnaire Continued...

Please think for a moment about the political report you just watched. Please react to the report on each of the scales below:

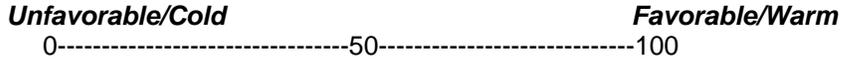
		<u>Video Evaluation</u>								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
UNCLEAR	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	CLEAR
INFORMATIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	NOT INFORMATIVE
UNFAIR	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	FAIR
UNDERSTANDABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	NOT UNDERSTANDABLE
NOT REVEALING	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	REVEALING
BALANCED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BIASED
UNTRUTHFUL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	TRUTHFUL
BENEFICIAL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	HARMFUL
BORING	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	INTERESTING
BELIEVABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	UNBELIEVABLE
BAD	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	GOOD
EXCITING	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	DULL
INACCURATE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	ACCURATE

2. Once again, please judge the following political candidates on the seven point scale.

Betty Castor

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
UNQUALIFIED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	QUALIFIED
SOPHISTICATED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	UNSOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	HONEST
BELIEVABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	FRIENDLY
SINCERE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	INSINCERE
EXCITABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	CALM
UNAGGRESSIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	AGGRESSIVE
WEAK	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	STRONG
ACTIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	INACTIVE

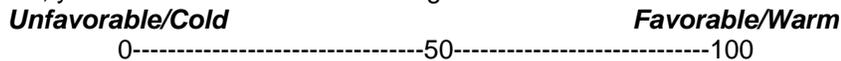
Please give us your feelings toward Betty Castor on the feeling thermometer below. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward her. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward her and that you don't care too much for her. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate her at the 50 degree mark.



Write in your choice of degrees for Betty Castor: _____ degrees
 3. Mel Martinez

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
UNQUALIFIED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:QUALIFIED
SOPHISTICATED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNSOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:HONEST
BELIEVABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:FRIENDLY
SINCERE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:INSINCERE
EXCITABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:CALM
UNAGGRESSIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:AGGRESSIVE
WEAK	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:STRONG
ACTIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	:INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Mel Martinez on this feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward him. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward him and that you don't care too much for him. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate him at the 50 degree mark.



Write in your choice of degrees for Mel Martinez: _____ degrees

Please circle only one answer for each question below.

4. What political seat are the above two candidates running for?
 - a). U.S. Congress
 - b). U.S. Senate
 - c). State legislature
 - d). Local office

5. Which of the candidates is a Republican?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

6. Which of the candidates is a Democrat?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

7. Which of the candidates formerly held a *state* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

8. Which of the candidates formerly held a *federal* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

9. Which of the candidates do you feel lied the most?
a). Betty Castor
b). Mel Martinez
10. Which of the candidates do you feel was the most truthful?
a). Betty Castor
b). Mel Martinez

For the next section please mark only one choice.

11. If you were voting in an election based on the video you just saw, how likely would you be to vote for Betty Castor?
a. very likely
b. somewhat likely
c. no opinion
d. somewhat unlikely
e. very unlikely.
12. If you were voting in an election based on the video you just saw, how likely would you be to vote for Mel Martinez?
a. very likely
b. somewhat likely
c. no opinion
d. somewhat unlikely
e. very unlikely.

Please indicate your level of interest in the following activities by circling only one choice.

13. See more political ads on television or on the Internet.
a. very likely
b. somewhat likely
c. no opinion
d. somewhat unlikely
e. very unlikely.
14. Watch television news for more information about political campaigns.
a. very likely
b. somewhat likely
c. no opinion
d. somewhat unlikely
e. very unlikely.
15. Volunteer for a political campaign.
a. very likely
b. somewhat likely
c. no opinion
d. somewhat unlikely
e. very unlikely.
16. Participate in an on-line chat about politics.
a. very likely
b. somewhat likely
c. no opinion
d. somewhat unlikely
e. very unlikely.

17. Talk with friends about politics.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.
18. Read newspapers for more information about political campaigns.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.
19. Contact political candidates by telephone or e-mail.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.
20. Use the Internet for general campaign information.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.
21. Vote in the next election.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.
22. Contribute money to a candidate.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.
23. Use the Internet to obtain more information about issues.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.
24. Visit a candidate Website.
- very likely
 - somewhat likely
 - no opinion
 - somewhat unlikely
 - very unlikely.

Earlier you gave us some of your feelings about politics and politicians. We'd like to get your opinions again on these same items. For each one, please circle whether you strongly agree, agree somewhat, have no opinion, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree.

25. "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

26. "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

27. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

28. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

29. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

30. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

31. "One never knows what politicians really think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

32. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

33. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

34. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

35. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

36. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself tying the information to ideas I had before.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

37. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

38. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

39. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

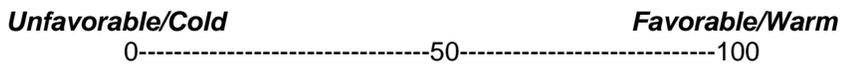
40. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

If you think the candidate is between these two extremes, or you aren't familiar with the candidate you would mark an "x" beneath the number "4" to indicate your neutrality or "don't know." Please react to the candidates on each of the scales below:

1. Betty Castor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
UNQUALIFIED			_____	_____	_____	_____	:QUALIFIED
SOPHISTICATED			_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNSOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST			_____	_____	_____	_____	:HONEST
BELIEVABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL			_____	_____	_____	_____	:SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY			_____	_____	_____	_____	:FRIENDLY
SINCERE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:INSINCERE
EXCITABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:CALM
UNAGGRESSIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:AGGRESSIVE
WEAK			_____	_____	_____	_____	:STRONG
ACTIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Betty Castor on the feeling thermometer below. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward her. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward her and that you don't care too much for her. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate her at the 50 degree mark.



Write in your choice of degrees for Betty Castor: _____ degrees

2. Mel Martinez

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
UNQUALIFIED			_____	_____	_____	_____	:QUALIFIED
SOPHISTICATED			_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNSOPHISTICATED
DISHONEST			_____	_____	_____	_____	:HONEST
BELIEVABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNBELIEVABLE
UNSUCCESSFUL			_____	_____	_____	_____	:SUCCESSFUL
ATTRACTIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:UNATTRACTIVE
UNFRIENDLY			_____	_____	_____	_____	:FRIENDLY
SINCERE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:INSINCERE
EXCITABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:CALM
UNAGGRESSIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:AGGRESSIVE
WEAK			_____	_____	_____	_____	:STRONG
ACTIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	:INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Mel Martinez on this feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward him. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward him and that you don't care too much for him. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate him at the 50 degree mark.

Unfavorable/Cold**Favorable/Warm**

0-----50-----100

Write in your choice of degrees for Mel Martinez: _____ degrees

Please circle only one answer for each question below.

3. What political seat are the above two candidates running for?

- a). U.S. Congress
- b). U.S. Senate
- c). State legislature
- d). Local office

4. Which of the candidates is a Republican?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

5. Which of the candidates is a Democrat?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

6. Which of the candidates formerly held a *state* political position?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

7. Which of the candidates formerly held a *federal* political position?

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

Following are some statements about politics and politicians. For each one, please circle whether you a). strongly agree, b). agree somewhat, c). have no opinion, d). disagree somewhat, or e). strongly disagree.

8. "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do."

- a). Strongly Agree
- b). Agree Somewhat
- c). No Opinion
- d). Disagree Somewhat
- e). Strongly Disagree

9. "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

- a). SA
- b). AS
- c). NO
- d). DS
- e). SD

10. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."

- a). SA
- b). AS
- c). NO
- d). DS
- e). SD

11. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."

- a). SA
- b). AS
- c). NO
- d). DS
- e). SD

12. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."

- a). SA
- b). AS
- c). NO
- d). DS
- e). SD

13. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."

- a). SA
- b). AS
- c). NO
- d). DS
- e). SD

14. "One never knows what politicians really think."

- a). SA
- b). AS
- c). NO
- d). DS
- e). SD

15. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

16. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

17. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

18. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

19. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself connecting the information to ideas I had before.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

20. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

21. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

22. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

23. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

24. If a friend asked me about the general election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

Now you will be asked some questions about yourself. Circle the best answer or fill in the blank provided.

26. Are you male or female?

- a). male
b). female

27. Which of the following best represents your ethnic background?

- a). Asian or Pacific Islander
b). Non-Hispanic White (Caucasian)
c). African-American
d). Spanish or Hispanic origin
e). Multi-racial or mixed race
f). Native American

28. Please write in your age as accurately as you can in years and months, rounding up to the next month. For example, if you were born in September of 1984, you would indicate 20 years and 1 month.

_____years _____months

29. Which of the following best represents your political beliefs?

- a). Republican
b). Democrat
c). Independent

d). Other (name)_____

30. Thinking of the party affiliation that you have just identified, please mark the **strength of your affiliation** below.

strong:_____ :_____ :_____ :_____ :_____ :weak

31. Are you registered to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
- b). no

32. Did you vote in the last local, state or national election?

- a). yes
- b). no, registered, but did not vote
- c). no, not registered

33. Do you intend to vote in the upcoming general election?

- a). yes
- b). no

34. If the general election were held today, for whom would you vote? Select ONE choice.

- a). Betty Castor
- b). Mel Martinez

STOP HERE. TURN THE SURVEY TO THE NEXT BLANK PAGE AND PLACE IT ON THE TOP OF YOUR COMPUTER MONITOR. DO NOT LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEXT SECTION OF THIS SURVEY UNTIL YOU ARE DIRECTED TO DO SO.

(blank page)

Website Feedback

We would now like to ask for your feedback on a website. Please follow these instructions carefully, step by step. If at any time you aren't sure what to do or you cannot find a specified link, please quietly raise your hand.

- 1). Double click on the Internet Explorer Icon the computer desktop
- 2). Visit the UCF WebCT site at <http://webct.ucf.edu>
- 3). Logon, using your WebCT ID and password
- 4). Click on the link for RTV 3304, Electronic Journalism II
- 5). Click on the button that says "Survey 2"
- 6). The home page for Senatewatch.org will appear. Take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the site, selecting any links you choose.
- 7) Put on the headphones provided at your computer. (There is a volume icon that looks like a speaker on the lower right corner of your screen if you need to make adjustments). Scroll down the home page and double click on the "Ad Watch" Video in the center of the page. A Real

Player box will appear. Click on the “play” button. Watch and listen carefully to the video (only one time).

8). When you are finished viewing the video, remove your headphones and complete the rest of the questionnaire.

Survey 2 Questionnaire, Continued....

Please think for a moment about the video that appeared on the website you just viewed. Please react to the video on each of the scales below:

1.							<u>Video Evaluation</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	UNCLEAR			_____	_____	_____	_____	: CLEAR
	INFORMATIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: NOT INFORMATIVE
	UNFAIR			_____	_____	_____	_____	: FAIR
	UNDERSTANDABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: NOT UNDERSTANDABLE
	NOT REVEALING			_____	_____	_____	_____	: REVEALING
	BALANCED			_____	_____	_____	_____	: BIASED
	UNTRUTHFUL			_____	_____	_____	_____	: TRUTHFUL
	BENEFICIAL			_____	_____	_____	_____	: HARMFUL
	BORING			_____	_____	_____	_____	: INTERESTING
	BELIEVABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: UNBELIEVABLE
	BAD			_____	_____	_____	_____	: GOOD
	EXCITING			_____	_____	_____	_____	: DULL
	INACCURATE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: ACCURATE

2. Once again, please judge the following political candidates on the seven point scale.

Betty Castor

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	UNQUALIFIED			_____	_____	_____	_____	: QUALIFIED
	SOPHISTICATED			_____	_____	_____	_____	: UNSOPHISTICATED
	DISHONEST			_____	_____	_____	_____	: HONEST
	BELIEVABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: UNBELIEVABLE
	UNSUCCESSFUL			_____	_____	_____	_____	: SUCCESSFUL
	ATTRACTIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: UNATTRACTIVE
	UNFRIENDLY			_____	_____	_____	_____	: FRIENDLY
	SINCERE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: INSINCERE
	EXCITABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: CALM
	UNAGGRESSIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: AGGRESSIVE
	WEAK			_____	_____	_____	_____	: STRONG
	ACTIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Betty Castor on the feeling thermometer below. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward her. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward her and that you don't care too much for her. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate her at the 50 degree mark.

Unfavorable/Cold **Favorable/Warm**

0-----50-----100

Write in your choice of degrees for Betty Castor: _____ degrees

3. Mel Martinez

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	UNQUALIFIED			_____	_____	_____	_____	: QUALIFIED
	SOPHISTICATED			_____	_____	_____	_____	: UNSOPHISTICATED
	DISHONEST			_____	_____	_____	_____	: HONEST
	BELIEVABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: UNBELIEVABLE
	UNSUCCESSFUL			_____	_____	_____	_____	: SUCCESSFUL
	ATTRACTIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: UNATTRACTIVE
	UNFRIENDLY			_____	_____	_____	_____	: FRIENDLY
	SINCERE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: INSINCERE
	EXCITABLE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: CALM
	UNAGGRESSIVE			_____	_____	_____	_____	: AGGRESSIVE

WEAK _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:STRONG
 ACTIVE _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:INACTIVE

Please give us your feelings toward Mel Martinez on this feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward him. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 mean that you don't feel favorable toward him and that you don't care too much for him. If you don't feel particularly warm or cold, or you are unfamiliar with this candidate, you would rate him at the 50 degree mark.

Unfavorable/Cold 0-----50-----100 **Favorable/Warm**

Write in your choice of degrees for Mel Martinez: _____degrees

Please circle only one answer for each question below.

4. What political seat are the above two candidates running for?
 - a). U.S. Congress
 - b). U.S. Senate
 - c). State legislature
 - d). Local office
5. Which of the candidates is a Republican?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez
6. Which of the candidates is a Democrat?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez
7. Which of the candidates formerly held a *state* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez
8. Which of the candidates formerly held a *federal* political position?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez
9. Which of the candidates do you feel lied the most?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez
10. Which of the candidates do you feel was the most truthful?
 - a). Betty Castor
 - b). Mel Martinez

For the next section please mark only one choice.

11. If you were voting in an election based on the video you viewed inside the website, how likely would you be to vote for Betty Castor?
 - a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.

12. If you were voting in an election based on the video you viewed inside the website, how likely would you be to vote for Mel Martinez?
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.

Please indicate your level of interest in the following activities by circling only one choice.

13. See more political ads on television or on the Internet.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
14. Watch television news for more information about political campaigns.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
15. Volunteer for a political campaign.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
16. Participate in an on-line chat about politics.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
17. Talk with friends about politics.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
18. Read newspapers for more information about political campaigns.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion
 - d. somewhat unlikely
 - e. very unlikely.
19. Contact political candidates by telephone or e-mail.
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. no opinion

- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

20. Use the Internet for general campaign information.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

21. Vote in the next election.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

22. Contribute money to a candidate.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

23. Use the Internet to obtain more information about issues.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

24. Visit a candidate Website.

- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. no opinion
- d. somewhat unlikely
- e. very unlikely.

Earlier you gave us some of your feelings about politics and politicians. We'd like to get your opinions again on these same items. For each one, please circle whether you a). strongly agree, b). agree somewhat, c). have no opinion, d). disagree somewhat, or e). strongly disagree.

25. "Whether I vote or not has no influence on what politicians do."

- a).Strongly Agree b) Agree Somewhat c).No Opinion d).Disagree Somewhat e).Strongly Disagree

26. "People like me don't have any say about what the government does."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

27. "One cannot always trust what politicians say."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

28. "I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

29. "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people."

- a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

30. "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
31. "One never knows what politicians really think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
32. "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
33. "One can be confident that politicians will always do the right thing."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
34. "Politicians often quickly forget their election promises after a political campaign is over."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
35. "Politicians are more interested in power than in what the people think."
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
36. When I come across information about candidates or issues in the election, I find myself connecting the information to ideas I had before.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
37. I try to keep track of the opinions my friends have about political candidates and issues.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
38. When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
39. When I hear about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
40. News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD
41. If a friend asked me about the general election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.
a).SA b) AS c).NO d).DS e). SD

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, TURN OVER YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE AND PLACE IT ON TOP OF YOUR COMPUTER MONITOR. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

To be cut on the line below by the researcher:

Subject Number _____ Cell Number _____

NOTE: THIS SHEET WILL BE DETACHED AND YOUR SURVEY RESPONSES WILL NOT BE IDENTIFIED BY YOUR NAME OR ANY INFORMATION PROVIDED BELOW.

As the political campaign continues to develop, we would like to be able to contact you again (via e-mail) to learn what you are thinking about the campaign and candidates. If you are willing to be contacted again by the researcher, please provide the following information:

E-Mail Address (*please write legibly*):

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lisa Mills received her B.A in English from Jacksonville University, her M.A. in Mass Communication at the University of Central Florida and is scheduled to receive her Ph.D. in Political Communication this year from the University of Florida. She is currently an Instructor of Radio-Television at UCF, where she began teaching in 1999. From 1981-1999 she produced local television newscasts and special projects for commercial television stations in Florida and North Carolina.

Ms. Mills specializes in broadcast news writing and field production. Her research interests center on news media coverage of political ads. She has presented academic papers at national and international conferences and won several professional awards. She is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi and Lambda Pi Eta honor societies. In her spare time Ms. Mills enjoys running, surfing and photography.